MARVEL

NEW X-MEN

FINCH
FIRCHOW
08

THE QUEST FOR MAGIK

THE COMPLETE COLLECTION

NEW X-MEN

THE QUEST FOR MAGIK

THE COMPLETE COLLECTION

COLLECTION EDITOR **Mark D. Beazley**
ASSISTANT EDITOR **Caitlin O'Connell**
ASSOCIATE MANAGING EDITOR **Kateri Woody**
ASSOCIATE MANAGER, DIGITAL ASSETS **Joe Hochstein**
SENIOR EDITOR, SPECIAL PROJECTS **Jennifer Grünwald**
VP PRODUCTION & SPECIAL PROJECTS **Jeff Youngquist**
RESEARCH & LAYOUT **Jeph York**
PRODUCTION **Salena Mahina**
BOOK DESIGNER **Adam Del Re with Stacie Zucker**
DIGITAL MANAGER/PRODUCTION **Tim Smith 3**
DIGITAL PRODUCTION **Kou Chen & Rachel Young**

SVP PRINT, SALES & MARKETING **David Gabriel**
DIRECTOR, LICENSED PUBLISHING **Sven Larsen**

EDITOR IN CHIEF **C.B. Cebulski**
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER **Joe Quesada**
PRESIDENT **Dan Buckley**
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **Alan Fine**

X-Men created by **Stan Lee & Jack Kirby**

© 2019 MARVEL. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental.

NEW X-MEN
THE QUEST FOR MAGIK
THE COMPLETE COLLECTION

X-MEN UNLIMITED #14

C.B. Cebulski WRITER
David Aja ARTIST
Frank D'Armata COLORIST

NEW X-MEN #33-36

Craig Kyle & **Christopher Yost** WRITERS
Paco Medina PENCILER
Juan Vlasco INKER
Brian Reber COLORIST

NEW X-MEN #37-43

Christopher Yost & **Craig Kyle** PLOTTERS
Christopher Yost SCRIPTER
Skottie Young PENCILER

Sean Parsons (#37-38) & **Skottie Young** (#39-43) with **Jay Leisten** (#38) INKERS

Jean-François Beaulieu (#37-43) & **Skottie Young** (#37-38 & #40-43) COLORISTS

Niko Henrichon STORYBOOK PAGES, ISSUE #37

X-MEN: DIVIDED WE STAND #2

C.B. Cebulski WRITER
David Yardin ARTIST
John Rauch COLORIST

X-INFERNUS #1-4

C.B. Cebulski WRITER
Giuseppe Camuncoli PENCILER
Jesse Delperdang with **Craig Yeung** (#2) INKERS
Marte Gracia COLORIST

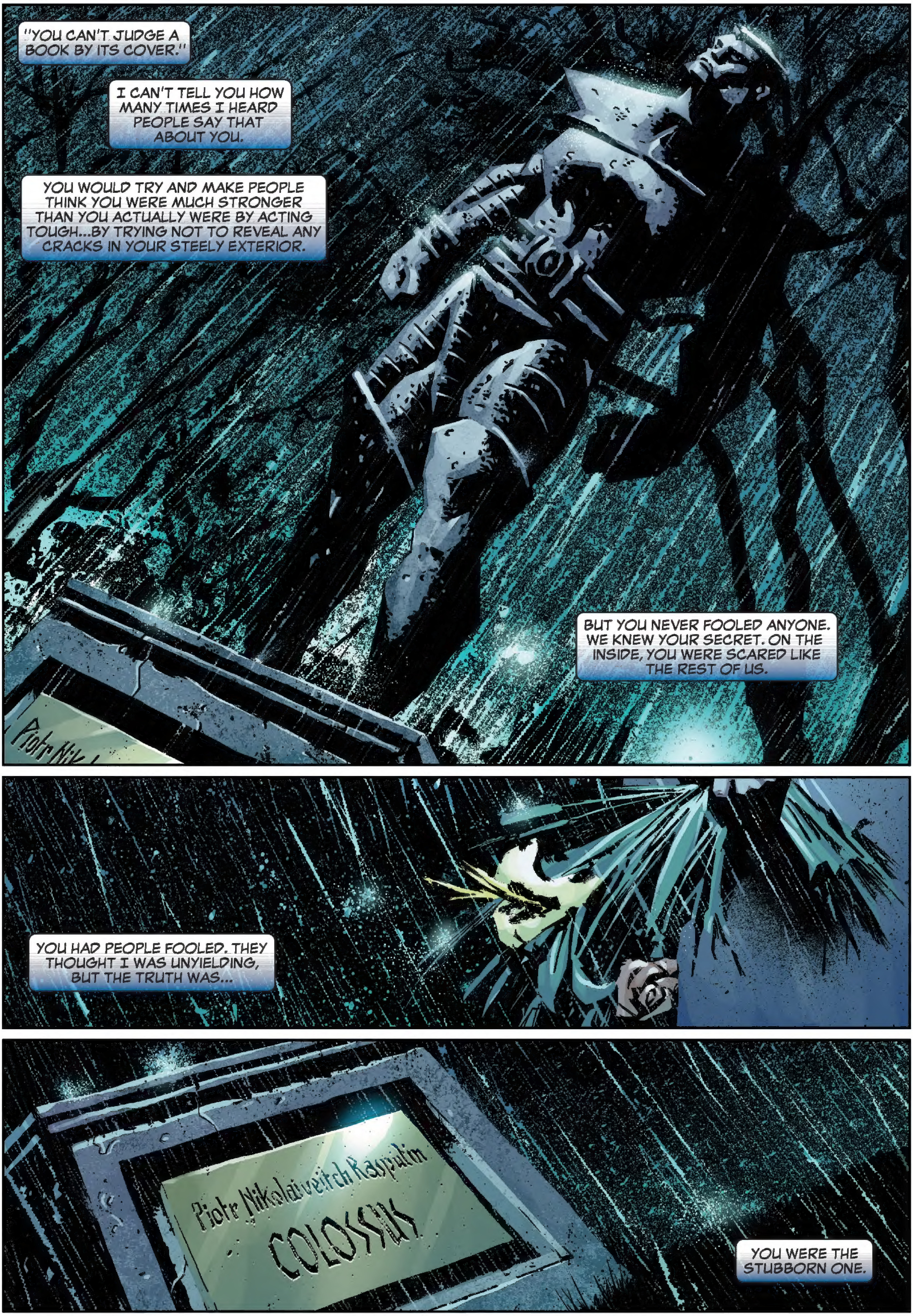
Special Thanks to **Enrica Jang**

Dave Sharpe (X-Men Unlimited, New X-Men), **VC's Joe Caramagna** (X-Men: Divided We Stand) & **Dave Lanphear** (X-Infernus)
LETTERERS

Leinil Francis Yu & **Dave McCaig** (X-Men Unlimited #14); **Paco Medina**, **Juan Vlasco** & **Marte Gracia** (New X-Men #33-36); **Niko Henrichon** (New X-Men #37); **Skottie Young** & **Tim Townsend** (New X-Men #38-41); **Skottie Young** (New X-Men #42-43); **Brandon Peterson** (X-Men: Divided We Stand #2); **David Finch**, **Danny Miki** & **Jason Keith** (X-Infernus #1); **David Finch**, **Danny Miki** & **Steve Firchow** (X-Infernus #2-3); **David Finch**, **Danny Miki** & **John Rauch** (X-Infernus #4); **Olivier Coipel**, **Mark Morales** & **Morry Hollowell** (X-Infernus Saga)
COVER ART

Sean Ryan & **Daniel Ketchum** with **Aubrey Sitterson** & **Will Panzo** ASSISTANT EDITORS
Nick Lowe & **Sean Ryan** with **Warren Simons** EDITORS
Nick Lowe SUPERVISING EDITOR
Axel Alonso EXECUTIVE EDITOR

X-MEN UNLIMITED 14


"YOU CAN'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER."
I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MANY TIMES I HEARD PEOPLE SAY THAT ABOUT YOU.
YOU WOULD TRY AND MAKE PEOPLE THINK YOU WERE MUCH STRONGER THAN YOU ACTUALLY WERE BY ACTING TOUGH...BY TRYING NOT TO REVEAL ANY CRACKS IN YOUR STEELY EXTERIOR.
BUT YOU NEVER FOOLED ANYONE. WE KNEW YOUR SECRET. ON THE INSIDE, YOU WERE SCARED LIKE THE REST OF US.
YOU HAD PEOPLE FOOLED. THEY THOUGHT I WAS UNYIELDING, BUT THE TRUTH WAS...
Piotr Nikolaievitch Rasputin
COLOSSUS
YOU WERE THE STUBBORN ONE.

BUT AS YEVGENY YEVTUSHENKO SAID, "TIME HAS A WAY OF DEMONSTRATING THAT THE MOST STUBBORN ARE THE MOST INTELLIGENT."
AND THE POET WAS RIGHT, FOR NO MATTER HOW IMPULSIVELY OR BULLHEADED YOU ACTED, YOU ALWAYS MANAGED TO FIND THE ERRORS OF YOUR WAYS.
LIKE WHEN THE MORLOCKS WERE MASSACRED IN THEIR OWN TUNNELS.
I'LL NEVER FORGET HOW YOU REACTED.
YOU HAVE TO LET THIS GO.
WHAT?!
THE MORLOCKS WERE SLAUGHTERED, PIOTR! FOR SIMPLY BEING MUTANTS!
AND YOU WERE THERE! HOW CAN YOU SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT AFTER SEEING IT HAPPEN?!
WE *ALL* REGRET WHAT HAPPENED, ILLYANA. THEIR DEATHS WEIGH HEAVILY ON EVERYONE HERE.
WELL YOU COULD'VE FOOLED ME! KITTY, DANI, DOUG...THEY'RE ALL SO CALM ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED!
PEOPLE GRIEVE IN DIFFERENT WAYS, SISTER.
WE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT DEATH IS PART OF THIS LIFE WE CHOOSE TO LEAD.
WHEN ONE OF US PASSES, IT'S BEST WE PUT IT BEHIND US AND MOVE ON AS QUICKLY AS WE CAN.
THE SOONER YOU LEARN THAT--

NO! THE ONLY THING I WANT TO LEARN IS HOW TO BRING THEM BACK! THERE HAS TO BE A WAY!
DO NOT BE FOOLISH, SISTER. YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO REALIZE THERE'S NO COMING BACK FROM DEATH.
EVEN YOU CAN'T BELIEVE THAT, BIG BROTHER! WE'VE HAD FRIENDS COME BACK BEFORE. WHY CAN'T IT HAPPEN AGAIN?!
WHY CAN'T WE *MAKE* IT HAPPEN?
ALL THESE ANCIENT BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS THAT XAVIER'S COLLECTED FROM GOD KNOWS WHERE-- WHO KNOWS WHAT SECRETS THEY HOLD?!
THINK ABOUT IT...WE CAN DO ANYTHING! WE HAVE FRIENDS WHO CAN TRANSLATE THESE! WE HAVE ENEMIES WHO'VE ACHIEVED IMMORTALITY, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE!
IF WE COULD ALL WORK TOGETHER AND FIND SOME WAY TO UNLOCK THE MYSTERIES OF DEATH-- IF THEY'D JUST HELP ME, MAYBE TOGETHER WE COULD--
--THERE IS NO 'MAYBE' WHEN DEALING WITH DEATH, ILLYANA. DEATH IS FINALITY AND YOU MUST ACCEPT THAT.
YES, WE HAVE HAD FRIENDS WHO WE BELIEVED DEAD WHO WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO RETURN FROM THE DARKNESS BEYOND.
THIS IS NOT ONE OF THOSE TIMES. THE MORLOCKS WHO DIED WILL NOT BE SO LUCKY.

DAMN IT, PIOTR! WHY DOES EVERYTHING HAVE TO BE SO BLACK-AND-WHITE WITH YOU?!
BECAUSE I KNOW THAT THERE'S NEVER ANY HOPE TO BE FOUND IN THAT GRAY AREA IN BETWEEN.
WELL, I'M GONNA PROVE YOU WRONG! I'M GOING TO FIND A WAY TO RESURRECT THEM!
YOU'VE TAKEN THIS CHILDISH OUTBURST FAR ENOUGH, ILLYANA. IT'S TIME YOU--
TIME! YES, THAT'S THE ANSWER, PIOTR! WHY DIDN'T I REALIZE IT BEFORE?!
WHAT DO YOU...? ILLYANA, YOU CAN'T--
YES, I CAN.
THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES! I KNOW YOU ARE MORE RESPONSIBLE THAN THIS! GOING BACK AND PLAYING WITH TIME--YOU CAN DESTROY EVERYONE! EVERYTHING!
OH, LITTLE SISTER... WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?
WHY COULD YOU NEVER UNDERSTAND?

I DON'T NEED ANYONE'S HELP. I CAN BRING THE MORLOCKS BACK ON MY OWN.
HERE IN LIMBO, I CONTROL SPACE AND TIME!
I CAN GO BACK AND SET THINGS STRAIGHT!

NOTHING PERSONAL.
NO! PLEASE!
I CAN SET THINGS STRAIGHT...
"THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES!"
PLEASE!
"I KNOW YOU ARE MORE RESPONSIBLE THAN THIS!"
I CAN... I CAN SAVE THEM...
"YOU CAN DESTROY EVERYTHING!"
I CAN...
BLAM!

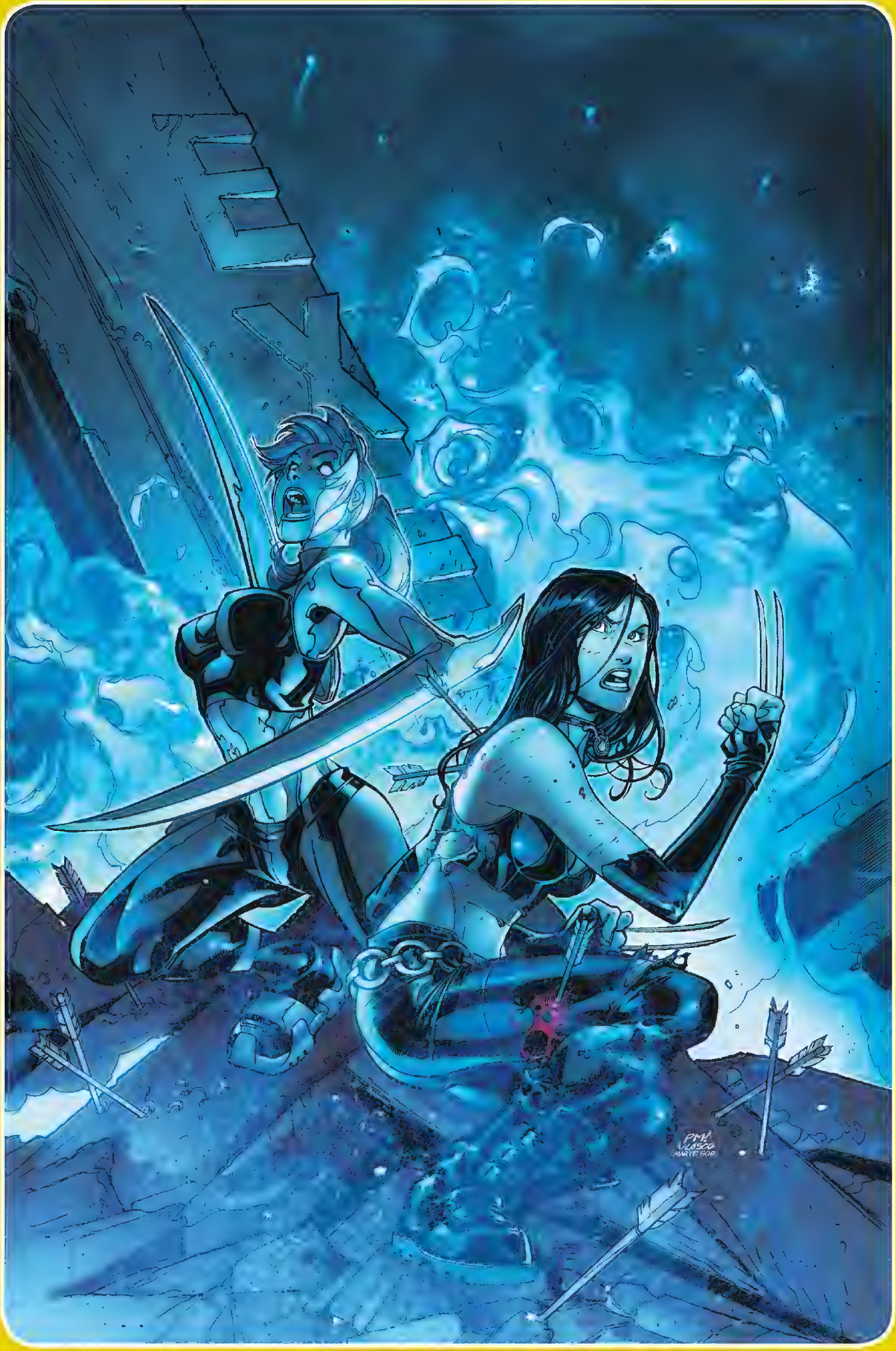
THEY'RE DEAD.
I HAVE TO LET THEM GO NOW.
YOU WERE RIGHT. THERE IS NO COMING BACK. NO MATTER WHAT WE CAN DO WITH OUR POWERS, WE HAVE TO LET THEM REST IN PEACE.
I'M SORRY I ACTED OUT LIKE THAT, PIOTR.
HUSH NOW, LITTLE SNOWFLAKE. IT IS I WHO SHOULD BE APOLOGIZING TO YOU. I STILL TREAT YOU AS THE CHILD I ONCE REMEMBER.

THAT'S WHY I LOVE YOU, PIOTR.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO DIE, PIOTR. PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO WITHOUT YOU.
NEVER FEAR, ILLYANA. I WILL ALWAYS BE HERE FOR YOU.
PROMISE ME, PETER.
I...I PROMISE.

YOU LIAR.
"I PROMISE."
WHAT AN EMPTY ASSURANCE THAT TURNED OUT TO BE.
"THAT IS WHY I LOVE YOU, PIOTR."
"PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO WITHOUT YOU."
llyana Nikolaiveitch Rasputin
MAGIK
AS I SAID, YOU WERE ALWAYS ABLE TO GET INSIDE PEOPLE'S HEADS. NEVER LETTING ME FORGET YOUR WORDS.
YOU WERE ALWAYS THE STUBBORN ONE...

...ILLYANA.
I'M SORRY IT TOOK ME SO LONG TO COME AND PAY MY RESPECTS, SNOWFLAKE.
I DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO. I WAS SO CONFUSED.
FIRST THE SHOCK, AND THEN THE GUILT. IT WAS ALL SO... SO...
...OVERWHELMING.
OH, ILLYANA, WHAT A FOOL I WAS! SPEAKING TO YOU OF THE FINALITY OF DEATH, TELLING YOU THERE WAS NO COMING BACK.

BUT LOOK AT ME NOW, KNEELING HERE BEFORE YOUR GRAVE, IN THE FLESH, BREATHING AGAIN...
...WHILE YOU REMAIN LOCKED IN DEATH'S COLD EMBRACE.
IT'S NOT FAIR!
I WOULD DO ANYTHING TO GET YOU BACK. ILLYANA. ANYTHING. YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW SORRY I AM I COULD NOT KEEP MY PROMISE TO YOU.
Illyana Nikolai
EVEN IN DEATH, I'VE LEFT YOU ALL ALONE.
FORGIVE ME.
Dying Inside



NEW X-MEN 33

“MERCURY FALLING” PART 1 OF 4

O*N*E

SUBJECT: THE NEW X-MEN

With the exodus of the 198 from the grounds of the Xavier Institute, the O*N*E's mandate is now one of PROTECTION; specifically, protection of the X-Men and their charges, the STUDENT BODY of the Institute.

The X-Men and O*N*E's failure to protect the students from two separate assaults by the fanatic WILLIAM STRYKER has left over two-score of the children dead.

THIS LEVEL OF FAILURE CAN NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN.

One group of students in particular may require extra supervision, however… a squad of students being directly trained as the "next generation" of X-Men by EMMA FROST.

They recently stole one of the X-Men's jets, evaded the Sentinel Squad, and subsequently crashed the jet into downtown DALLAS to engage in a very public conflict with a CLASSIFIED assailant, codename: NIMROD.

This incident is being investigated, but until such time as a protocol is enacted against them, the following students are RED-FLAGGED:

SURGE, HELLION, MERCURY, ROCKSLIDE, DUST, DAVID ALLEYNE (aka PRODIGY) and X-23.

Students codenamed ELIXIR and ANOLE have been ORANGE-FLAGGED.

MERCURY FALLING

Part 1 of 4

PICK IT UP.
YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?
THE DANGER ROOM
NOT AT ALL. UNLESS YOU DON'T THINK YOU CAN DO IT.
FUNNY.
EVER SINCE EMMA TEMPORARILY TOOK THE "SAFETIES" OFF YOUR TELEKINESIS, YOU SEEM TO BE HAVING SOME TROUBLE CONTROLLING IT.
THE FINE MOTOR CONTROL, IF YOU WILL.
THAT'S RIDICULOUS.
SO YOU PUT ROCKSLIDE THROUGH THE WALL *ON PURPOSE* THE OTHER DAY?
HE WAS ANNOYING ME.
AND YOU *MEANT* FOR YOUR BED TO GO OUT THE WINDOW?
IT WAS ANNOYING ME, TOO.
THEN YOU'LL HAVE NO PROBLEM SIMPLY *PICKING UP* THIS PAPERCLIP.
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH ME.
I'M SO VERY GLAD TO HEAR THAT. PICK UP THE PAPERCLIP.
I DON'T NEED THIS.
NOW WOULD BE A GOOD TIME.
FINE!

VMMM
HA! SEE! YOU WANT ME TO MAKE IT DANCE FOR YOU?
SURE.
CHOOOOOM!

YES, WELL DONE, MR. KELLER. YOU *OBVIOUSLY* HAVE TOTAL CONTROL OVER YOUR POWERS.
YEAH. TOLD YOU.
I SUSPECT THAT WHILE YOUR POWER LEVELS *DID* COME BACK DOWN, THEY CAME BACK DOWN TO A HIGHER LEVEL.
YOU'RE MORE POWERFUL THAN BEFORE. IT'S GOING TO TAKE YOU TIME TO ADJUST. BUT UNTIL MARVEL GIRL RETURNS FOR SOME TUTORING, I SUGGEST YOU PRACTICE.
PREFERABLY AWAY FROM THE OTHERS.
PRACTICE. RIGHT. NO PROBLEM, PROFESSOR.
TELL ME... IS THAT A *GENUINE* EMOTION?

OR JUST SOMETHING YOUR MASTERS PROGRAMMED INTO YOU?
GET OUT OF MY MIND.
I'M NOT IN IT. I DON'T HAVE TO BE.
YOU'VE BEEN FOLLOWING JULIAN AROUND LIKE A PUPPY EVER SINCE YOU RETURNED FROM DALLAS.
PLEASE STOP.
YOU THINK I HATE YOU, BUT I DON'T.
IN MANY WAYS, WE ARE THE SAME.

I, TOO, HAVE DONE HORRIBLE THINGS IN MY LIFE.
I'VE HURT GOOD PEOPLE. DESTROYED MINDS.
KILLED THOSE I ONCE LOVED...MY OWN SISTER.
I UNDERSTAND EVIL AND DEATH, JUST AS YOU DO.
BUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US IS THAT MY ACTIONS WERE BY MY OWN CHOICE.
YOU *DON'T* HAVE A CHOICE.
WITH A SINGLE DROP OF THAT CHEMICAL... THAT "TRIGGER"... YOU LOSE CONTROL TO YOUR MASTERS AND KILL WHOMEVER THEY CHOOSE.
IF YOU CARE FOR JULIAN, THEN YOU WILL LEAVE HIM. LEAVE THIS SCHOOL **NOW**, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?!

SHE SAVED US! ALL OF US!
CESSILY...
NO! YOU ABANDON KEVIN, YOU HUMILIATE JULIAN, AND NOW YOU WANT LAURA TO LEAVE?!
WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOU?!
SHE NEARLY DIED SAVING OUR LIVES...SHE WOULD HAVE, IF NOT FOR JULIAN!
THIS IS HOW YOU TREAT HER?
THERE ARE THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW, CESSILY...I'M DOING THIS TO PROTECT YOU.
I DON'T CARE!
I'VE FOUND OUT MORE THAN ENOUGH ABOUT HOW YOU "PROTECT" YOUR STUDENTS, MISS FROST.
SLAM!
DAMMIT.

NEXT IS SOORAYA QADIR, CODENAME *DUST*.
THIS ONE TRANSFORMS INTO SAND, AND CAN PROJECT HERSELF WITH ENOUGH VELOCITY TO FLAY THE SKIN OFF YOU.
CONCUSSION GRENADES AND LIQUID ARE BOTH EFFECTIVE AGAINST HER.
AGAIN, THESE ARE THE MUTANTS THE TARGET IS MOST LIKELY TO BE WITH AT ANY GIVEN TIME.
EACH OF THEM IS UNDER CONSTANT O*N*E SURVEILLANCE, AND WE'VE TAPPED INTO THOSE SYSTEMS FOR REAL-TIME TRACKING.
SANTO VACCARO, CODENAME *ROCKSLIDE*. SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH, NEARLY INVULNERABLE SKIN DENSITY, AND CAN USE HIS APPENDAGES LIKE PROJECTILES, FIRING THEM WITH LEVEL FIVE FORCE.
GO FOR THE EYES AND MOUTH.
THE O*N*E FILES ON *ALL* OF THESE SUBJECTS HAVE BEEN RECENTLY UPDATED. THE THREAT LEVELS ON EACH OF THEM HAVE BEEN RAISED.
JULIAN KELLER, CODENAME *HELLION*. TELEKINETIC. THREAT LEVEL HAS BEEN UPPED TO SEVERE, AND REPORTS ARE COMING IN THAT HIS POWER LEVELS HAVE VASTLY INCREASED.
IF YOU'RE ENGAGING HIM, TRY SONICS OR ATTEMPT TO BLIND.

NORIKO ASHIDA, CODENAME **SURGE.** CAN ABSORB AND EMIT ELECTRICITY, AND MOVE AT HEIGHTENED SPEEDS.
YOUR UNIFORMS SHOULD PROVIDE YOU A MINIMUM OF PROTECTION IN THE SHORT TERM. JUST SHOOT HER.
HER GAUNTLETS REGULATE HER POWER, AND ARE ALSO VULNERABLE TO ATTACK.
SHE'S APPARENTLY THE SQUAD LEADER. O*N*E ANALYSIS SUGGESTS THAT SHE, HELLION AND THE HUMAN DAVID ALLEYNE ARE THE PRIMARY TARGETS FOR CHAIN OF COMMAND.
JOSHUA FOLEY, CODENAME **ELIXIR.** PREVIOUSLY A HEALER, HE RECENTLY BROADENED THE USE OF HIS POWER AND CAN NOW USE IT OFFENSIVELY.
HE CAN KILL YOU WITH A TOUCH. I RECOMMEND YOU DON'T LET HIM TOUCH YOU.
ONCE A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF, WE TAKE THE TARGET AND GET OUT.
NEITHER THE X-MEN NOR THE O*N*E SENTINELS ARE TO BE ENGAGED, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.
YOU'VE SEEN THE FILES...I DON'T NEED TO REMIND YOU HOW DANGEROUS THESE MUTANTS CAN BE.
EXCESSIVE FORCE IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

LAURA!
LAURA, WAIT!
MOVE.
OKAY!
WE'RE MOVING!
LAURA, WILL YOU WAIT UP?!
STOP! LOOK...
...I HEARD HOW HORRIBLE MISS FROST WAS, BUT YOU HAVE TO KNOW THAT WE DON'T WANT YOU TO LEAVE...
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
SHE'S RIGHT.
NO, SHE'S NOT! ALL THOSE THINGS SHE SAID...I DIDN'T MEAN TO OVERHEAR, I WAS JUST COMING TO CHECK ON...
SHE SAID... SHE WAS SAYING THAT...
OHMIGOD... YOU LIKE JULIAN.

I DO NOT WISH TO TALK ABOUT THIS.
YOU DO!
OH, LAURA... WE SHOULD...WE SHOULD, I DON'T KNOW, TALK. WE NEED TO *TALK*.
PLEASE MOVE.
LET'S GO GET A COFFEE! IN TOWN! SERIOUSLY, THIS WILL BE *SO* GOOD.
WHOA, CAN WE *DO* THAT NOW? I THOUGHT WE COULDN'T LEAVE! IS THAT NEW?
I WANT TO GO, TOO!
NO!
COME ON, LAURA!
AWWW. HULK SAD.

THE OFFICE OF SCOTT SUMMERS, HEADMASTER
SO WE'RE *NOT* IN TROUBLE?
NO, YOU'RE NOT IN TROUBLE. I CALLED YOU HERE TO APOLOGIZE.
WAIT...STOP. IS THERE ANY WAY WE CAN RECORD THIS OR SOMETHING? MAYBE GET IT IN WRITING?
DON'T PUSH IT, NORI. THE O*N*E IS FURIOUS WITH YOU. WHAT HAPPENED IN DALLAS MADE NATIONAL NEWS, AND MADE EVERYONE'S JOB HERE HARDER.
BUT YOU WERE RIGHT.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN HONEST WITH YOU FROM THE BEGINNING.
WE SUSPECTED THAT NIMROD HAD RETURNED BASED ON WHAT EMMA SAW OF STRYKER'S GAUNTLET, AND, OF COURSE, THE MESSAGE JAY LEFT FOR US.
YOU KNEW?
WE SUSPECTED. BUT WE DIDN'T WANT TO BROADCAST IT TO THE O*N*E.
AND YOU LEFT ANYWAY?
WHEN YOU CAME TO ME, I *ALREADY* HAD CABLE TRACKING IT. ANGEL AND HUSK WERE SEARCHING FOR IT, STORM HAD WAKANDAN AGENTS SEARCHING FOR IT...
THE MANSION WAS DEFENDED.
BUT THE REASON I DIDN'T TELL YOU WAS THAT IF YOU THOUGHT IT WAS OUT THERE, YOU'D GO AFTER IT.
AND OF COURSE, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED.
BUT I WAS WRONG TO LEAVE. HAD I BEEN HERE, YOU MAY NOT HAVE PUT YOUR LIVES IN DANGER.
AND BELIEVE IT OR NOT, KEEPING YOU OUT OF DANGER *IS* A PART OF MY JOB.

THE WORLD GETS MORE DANGEROUS EVERY DAY, I DON'T NEED TO TELL YOU THAT.
YOU'RE JUST KIDS...YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH THESE THINGS. YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO SUFFER THE LOSSES YOU HAVE.
BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT YOU DID AN AMAZING THING.
YOU STOOD YOUR GROUND AGAINST AN OPPONENT THAT EVEN THE X-MEN NEVER DEFEATED.
AND ACCORDING TO FORGE, HE AND YOUR TEAMMATES ARE ALIVE TODAY, THANKS TO THE TWO OF YOU.
EVEN WOLVERINE WAS IMPRESSED WHEN HE HEARD ABOUT IT. AND THAT'S AN ACCOMPLISHMENT.
I DISAGREED WITH EMMA'S METHOD OF CHOOSING YOUR SQUAD. BUT I AGREE WITH HER CHOICE OF ITS LEADER.
YOU'LL TRAIN WITH THE X-MEN, YOU'LL REPORT TO US, BUT THE SQUAD IS YOURS, NORI. IF YOU WANT TO ADD MEMBERS, JUST LET US KNOW.
WE'RE GOING TO LOOK TO YOUR TEAM TO HELP KEEP THE OTHER STUDENTS SAFE.
YEAH... OKAY...
AND DAVID... IF YOU STILL WANT TO LEAVE--
I'M STAYING.
GOOD. WE'LL FIGURE SOMETHING OUT.
I SORT OF FEEL BAD NOW FOR WANTING TO PUNCH YOU IN THE FACE, THOUGH.
I'M SORRY... WHAT?

DOCTOR ADAM HARKINS.
FACILITY RESEARCH HEAD.
TESTING ON THE CREATURE IS PROCEEDING. WE'RE ON SCHEDULE.
ASSUMING THE SUCCESS OF YOUR MISSION, OF COURSE.
DID YOU MAKE THE PAYMENT?
OF COURSE.
THEN THE MISSION WILL BE A SUCCESS.
WHAT DID YOU FIND FOR THE LIVE TEST?
APPARENTLY IT CALLS ITSELF "MAMMOMAX." IT SHOULD BE MORE THAN SUFFICIENT.
KIMURA.
YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, DOCTOR HARKINS.
THE TARGET IS ON THE MOVE.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS, BUT SHE'S LEAVING THE INSTITUTE, WITH ONLY ONE OTHER MUTANT WITH HER.
WELL, NOW... LOOKS LIKE TODAY IS OUR LUCKY DAY.

PERHAPS TOMORROW YOU CAN CONCENTRATE ON DESTROYING A DIFFERENT WING OF THE MANSION.
YOU'RE HYSTERICAL, DOC.
HEY, FOLEY. WHAT'S UP?
HEY, JULIAN. I JUST WANTED TO TALK TO DOCTOR McCOY.
BETTER YOU THAN ME. I'M HITTING THE SHOWERS...SOMEONE *SHED* ALL OVER ME.
IT'S A SIGN OF AFFECTION...
NOW HOW CAN I HELP YOU, MR. FOLEY?
I WANT TO LEARN EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT HUMAN ANATOMY, BIOLOGY, AND PHYSIOLOGY. EVERYTHING.
OH. WELL...
...GOOD?

GRIND STONE
CAFE
THANKS, LUNA.
WHY DO YOU ORDER A DRINK? YOU DO NOT NEED TO DRINK OR EAT.
HOW DO YOU KNOW--?
IT DOESN'T MATTER. I JUST LIKE TO HOLD IT. MAKES ME FEEL HUMAN.
MAKES PEOPLE FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE AROUND ME. IT MAY NOT SEEM LIKE IT, BUT I'M ONE OF THE LEAST HUMAN STUDENTS HERE.
NONE OF US ARE HUMAN.
I KNOW... BUT I LIKE TO LOOK HUMAN. DO HUMAN THINGS.
JULIAN KNOWS...AND I GUESS YOU DO, NOW.
BUT WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT YOU. YOU DON'T TALK MUCH.
RIGHT. WELL, I GUESS WE KNOW THAT YOU COULD KILL US ALL IF YOU WANTED TO.
THAT'S WHAT LOGAN SAID.

BUT YOU SAVED MY LIFE.
SURE, YOU HAD TO CUT OFF MY HANDS TO DO IT, BUT I WAS TRYING TO LOSE A FEW POUNDS, ANYWAY.
I JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU.
YOU'RE WELCOME.
DO YOU LIKE JULIAN?
YES. HE SAVED MY LIFE.
NO, I MEAN DO YOU LIKE *HIM*, LIKE HIM.
LIKE HIM, LIKE HIM?
DO YOU HAVE A CRUSH ON HIM?
I DO NOT WANT TO TALK ABOUT THIS.
LAURA, IT'S OKAY IF YOU DO. I UNDERSTAND, BELIEVE ME. I KNOW HOW IT IS TO LIKE SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T NECESSARILY LIKE YOU BACK.
NO, I--
LAURA?

GET OUT.
WHAT? LAURA, I DIDN'T MEAN TO UPSET YOU, I WAS JUST--
GET OUT OF HERE! NOW!
ALL OF YOU! RUN!
LAURA, WHAT'S WRONG?!
YOU HAVE TO GO! THEY'RE NOT HERE FOR YOU, THEY'RE HERE FOR ME.
THEY'RE HERE TO TAKE ME BA--

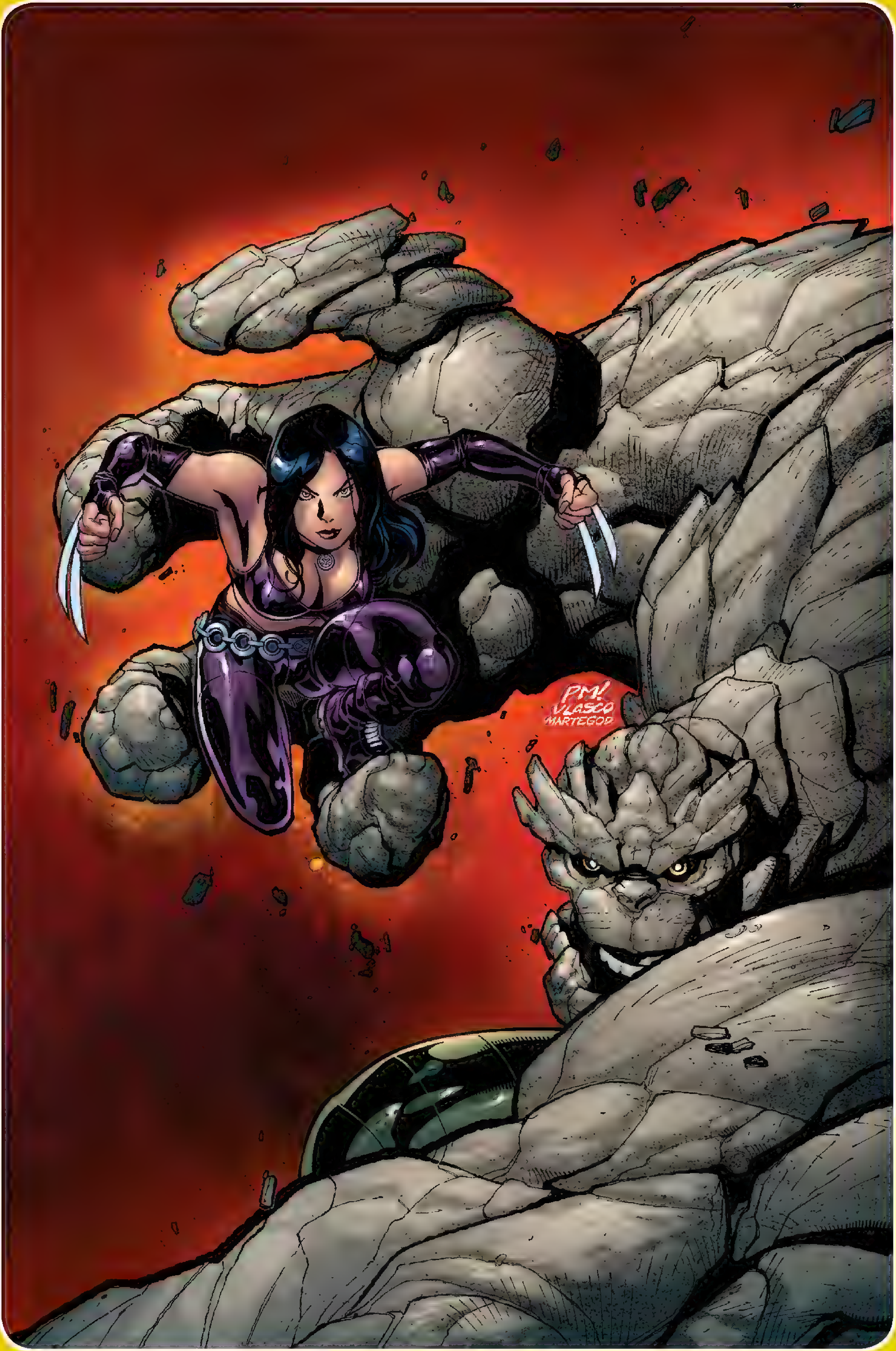
GRIND STONE
CAFE

UHHH...
LAURA...OH, GOD...WHAT HAPPENED?
LAURA?
SNIKT!
BUDDABUDDABUDDA
GET OUT OF HERE, CESSILY!
SHLUK!
AAAHHH!
RUN!

TAKE HER OUT!
NO!
WHAM!
UH!
BUDDABUDDABUDDA
WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE! WE HAVE TO GET BACK TO THE INSTITUTE!
WHAT?! I'M NOT GOING TO JUST LEAVE YOU HERE!
GET OUT OF HERE!
LAURA!
=HNN!=
THOK!
WELL, LOOK AT THIS...OUT FOR A LITTLE GIRL-TALK?

HI, X. MISS ME?
RUN, CESSILY.
SHE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS, KIMURA.
WHERE DID YOU LEARN SUCH NOBILITY? I DON'T REMEMBER YOU TAKING THAT CLASS AT THE FACILITY.
BUT ARROGANCE ALWAYS WAS YOUR PROBLEM, WASN'T IT, CLONE?
WE DIDN'T COME FOR *YOU*.

AAAAAAHHHH!


PM!
VLASCO
MARTEGOD

NEW X-MEN 34

"MERCURY FALLING" PART 2 OF 4

PORTLAND, OREGON.
NOT TOO LONG AGO...
CESSILY! COME ON, YOU'RE GOING TO BE LATE FOR PRACTICE!
CESS!
OKAY, I'M UP... JEEZ.
I'LL BE RIGHT DOWN, I--
GASP
DADDY!

CESSILY? WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
DADDY...
CESS?! OPEN THE DOOR!
DADDY... HELP ME...
CESSILY?
OH DEAR GOD.
CRASH!
PLEASE, DADDY... HELP ME...

...HELP ME, PLEASE...
AGAIN.
NNNNYEARRGH!
PLEASE... STOP...
LAURA...

FOURTEEN HOURS AGO.
SALEM CENTER, NEW YORK.
AAIIIEEEEE!
CESSILY!
THOK!
HKK!!
GET KINCAID AND LOAD HER INTO THE CONTAINMENT UNIT. I'LL HANDLE THE CLONE.
YOU'RE DEAD.
SHUK!
HUK!

BUDDA! BUDDA!
BUDDA! BUDDA!
AAAH!
STOP SCREWING AROUND!
THUP! THUP! THUP!
I SAID, GET THE GIRL IN THE VAN!
SNIKT!
STUPID GIRL!
AFTER WHAT YOU DID IN SAN FRANCISCO, YOU'RE LUCKY I DON'T REACH THROUGH YOUR SKULL AND PULL OUT YOUR BRAIN.

OH, COME ON! HOW MANY TIMES DO YOU HAVE TO TRY THAT BEFORE YOU GIVE IT UP?
SLASH!
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT.
SO ARE YOU.
YOU LITTLE--

BOOOM!
UHHH...
I HATE YOU, CLONE.
KIMURA! WE'RE GREEN!
KIMURA... DO YOU HAVE KINCAID?
SHE'S ON BOARD...I'M DEALING WITH X-23...
FORGET HER. WE NEED THE GIRL HERE NOW.
KIMURA!
ANOTHER TIME, X. SEE YOU SOON.
KIMURA!

...INCLUDING SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE YOUNG AVENGERS, STILL FUGITIVES UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE SUPER-HUMAN REGISTRATION ACT...
WHOA, WHOA, WHOA, **WHOA!** HOLD UP!
KB
THE XAVIER INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER LEARNING
THE YOUNG AVENGERS?! WHO THE HELL ARE ***THEY?!***
ARE YOU KIDDING?
ALL RIGHT, SEE IF YOU CAN FOLLOW...THEY'RE LIKE THE AVENGERS... BUT ***YOUNG.*** AND TWO OF THEM ARE--
STOP! THIS IS A JOKE, RIGHT? YOUNG AVENGERS? WHEN DID ***THAT*** HAPPEN?
SANTO, HAVE YOU SEEN CESSILY AROUND?
HOLY CRAP, JULIAN...DID YOU KNOW THERE WERE YOUNG FREAKING ***AVENGERS*** RUNNING AROUND?!
YEAH. SO?
SO?! DUDE... WE SHOULD GO BEAT THEM UP! LIKE, FOR NO REASON! IT'LL BE AWESOME! WHO'S THEIR STRONG GUY?
HULKLING.
GUYS? CESSILY?
WHAT KIND OF NAME IS "HULKLING"? ***LAME!***
GEE, I DON'T KNOW "ROCKSLIDE."
I SAW HER WITH X-23 BEFORE. I THINK THEY WERE GOING TO TOWN FOR COFFEE. THAT WAS A WHILE AGO, THOUGH.
THEY LOOKED A LITTLE INTENSE.
THANKS. THANKS FOR ***NOTHING,*** SANTO.
HEY, ALANI, DO YOU THINK SANTO COULD BEAT HULKLING IN A FIGHT?
NO WAY! HULKLING WOULD KILL HIM.
HEY! I'M RIGHT HERE!

LAURA? SOORAYA? YOU IN THERE?
IS CESSILY WITH...YOU... GUYS?
LAURA?
SNIKT!
SNIKT!

LAURA?! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
WHERE'S CESSILY?
SHE'S GONE.
SLIKT
SLIKT
BUT I'LL GET HER BACK.
STOP! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
GET HER BACK? WHERE IS SHE?!
THEY TOOK HER. THE ONES WHO MADE ME, TOOK HER.
AND THE LONGER YOU STAND HERE, THE HARDER IT'LL BE FOR ME TO TRACK HER.
I'M GOING WITH YOU.
NO.

CRASH!
I'M GOING WITH YOU.
UNDERSTAND?
YES.

THE OFFICE OF THE HEADMISTRESS.
THERE IS STILL NO WORD ON MY MOTHER'S LOCATION?
NO, I'M SORRY.
I'VE PERSONALLY ASKED VALERIE COOPER TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR YOU, SOORAYA.
BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO NEWS YET.
I UNDERSTAND.
IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU TRUST ME, SOORAYA. YOU CAN RELY ON ME.
I HAVE NOTHING BUT THE STUDENTS' BEST INTERESTS AT HEART, AND YOU CAN TRUST ME.
YOU DO TRUST ME, DON'T YOU?
I...UM, YES, OF COURSE, MISS FROST.
BZZT! BZZT!
WHAT?
EMMA...IT'S RAHNE SINCLAIR. I HAVE TO TALK TO YOU...IT'S ABOUT KEVIN. HE'S--
RRMMMMMBLE!

THIS IS LEXINGTON... WHATEVER THE HELL THAT WAS, IT CAME *OUT* OF THE MANSION.
I REPEAT, THIS IS *NOT* AN EXTERNAL ATTACK.
ATTEMPTING TO TRACK THE ENERGY SIGNATURE...
RAISE THE THREAT LEVEL TO RED.
THERE WILL BE NO MORE CASUALTIES. DO YOU HEAR ME? I WANT EVERY O*N*E AGENT REPORTING IN ON THEIR ASSIGNMENTS, RED FLAGS HAVE PRIORITY.
NOTIFY SUMMERS... WE'RE CONDUCTING A FULL ACCOUNTING OF ALL X-MEN AND STUDENTS, WHETHER HE LIKES IT OR NOT.

THE FACILITY R&D LABS. LOCATION, UNKNOWN.
GET HER OUT AND TRANSPORTED TO BUILDING THREE.
I DIDN'T MISS ANYTHING, DID I?
THE FIRST TEST IS ABOUT TO BEGIN. I HELD OFF BECAUSE I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU LIKE TO WATCH.
LET ME OUT!
WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
SHE'S GOT A LOT OF SPIRIT.
MISS KINCAID WAS A CHEERLEADER, AFTER ALL.
WELL, THAT JUST MAKES THIS ALL THE BETTER, DOESN'T IT?

DO YOU HEAR ME?! YOU'RE ALL DEAD!
THE BROTHERHOOD WILL COME FOR ME! EXODUS WILL COME AND THEN YOU'RE DEAD!
OPEN THE DOOR.
SHHMM
LET ME OUT!!
HHHKKKK...
WHAT THE--?
NYYYAAAAAARRGH!

THOK! THOK! THOK!
GO SEE WHO IT IS.
THOK! THOK! THOK!
IF ANYONE LOOKS AT MY CARDS, I'M GONNA SHOOT YOU. CAN I SHOOT 'EM, VIN?
SURE, JOHNNY.
HAHAHA!
THOK! THOK! THOK!
WHO IS IT?!
WHAM!

BLAM!
BLAM!
JOHNNY!
KILL THE BASTARD!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
IT'S SOME GIRL!
SHOOT HER!!
WE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE! GO!

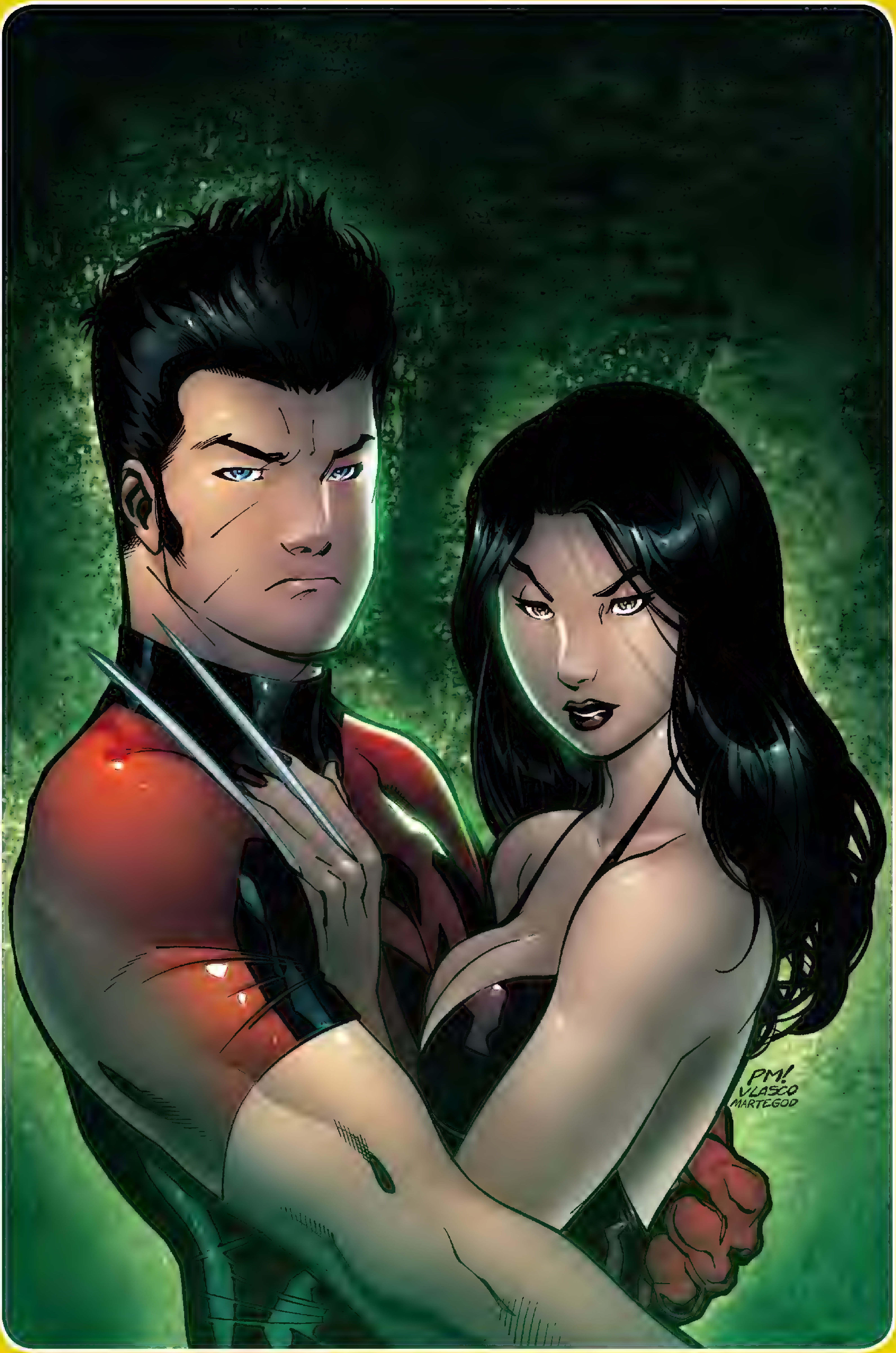
GET ME THAT FACILITY EGGHEAD! THEY SENT THEIR CLEANER INTO MY WAREHOUSE! I WANT HER *DEAD.*
I WANT ALL OF THEM DEAD!
BOSS... WE GOT A PROBLEM...
THOOOM!
KRAKOOOM!

UHHH...GET OUT...GOT TO GET...
SHRRIIP!
NO!
WHERE ARE THEY?
AAAAHH!
WHERE IS THE FACILITY OPERATING OUT OF THE EAST COAST?!
YOU HAVE THREE SECONDS.
ONE.
I DON'T KNOW!
TWO.
I SWEAR, I DON'T--
THREE.
CADILLAC JONES! ON THE EAST SIDE! HE KNOWS! PLEASE DON'T KILL ME, I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING!
I BELIEVE YOU.

BLAM
WHY DID YOU DO THAT?!
BECAUSE HE DID NOT HAVE ANY MORE INFORMATION.
BUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL HIM!
YES, I DID. HE WORKS FOR THE FACILITY. HE DESERVES TO DIE.
WE'LL FIND CESSILY, BUT NO MORE KILLING. DO YOU HEAR ME?
WE'LL SHAKE DOWN YOUR CONTACTS, WE'LL GET THE LOCATION--BUT NO MORE KILLING. UNDERSTAND?

WHERE AM I? WHAT'S GOING ON? WILL YOU TALK TO ME?!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?!
A LITTLE SOY SAUCE WOULD BE NICE.
WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?
OH, JUST YOUR FLESH. WELL, NOT ME, OF COURSE. I'M JUST HERE FOR THE SHOW.
LET'S BEGIN, SHALL WE?
I HAVE FRIENDS, THEY'LL COME FOR ME.
MMMMMMM

AAAAIIIIIIEEEEE!
YOUR FRIENDS WILL COME FOR YOU, HUH?
FUNNY...
"...THAT'S WHAT THE ELEPHANT SAID."


PM!
VLASCO
MARTEGOD

NEW X-MEN 35

"MERCURY FALLING" PART 3 OF 4

THE GRINDSTONE. NOW.
THE BOMB SQUAD GAVE THE ALL-CLEAR, CHIEF... THEY SAID THERE'S MORE BODIES INSIDE.
NYFD
WHAT THE HELL--?
CHIEF... YOU'RE GONNA WANT TO SEE THIS.
OH, GOD... THIS GUY'S HEAD IS MISSING!
GRIND STONE
HERRERA... HERRERA, COME IN!
COLONEL REYES WANTS THE MUTANTS BROUGHT BACK IN NOW! HERRERA, ARE YOU THERE?!

THE XAVIER INSTITUTE. HIGH ALERT.
YOU HAVE *GOT* TO BE JOKING.
NO, I'M NOT. YOU WERE RIGHT IN THE THICK OF IT WHEN APOCALYPSE CAME. BOTH ROGUE AND HAVOK TOLD CYCLOPS THAT YOU WERE--
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, ROXY?
HMM, WELL, LET ME SEE... YOU WANT ME TO JOIN UP WITH YOUR LITTLE SUPER HERO X-MEN WANNABE TEAM--
--BUT I'M THINKING THAT AFTER EVERYTHING THAT'S GONE DOWN SINCE M-DAY, ANYONE WHO WANTS TO BE AN X-MAN HAS A *SERIOUS* DEATH WISH.
ME AND RANDY ARE SERIOUSLY THINKING ABOUT CHECKING THE HELL OUT OF HERE BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT CHANGES ITS MIND AND SETS US ALL UP FOR A FIRING SQUAD.
I HEARD KELLER AND THE CLONE ALREADY ESCAPED.
ESCAPED? WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, ONYXX?
STUDENTS, YOU NEED TO COME WITH US. THE O*N*E HAS REQUESTED EVERYONE'S PRESENCE IN THE ASSEMBLY HALL.
FIRING. SQUAD.

WOW. HE JUST GAVE YOU THESE?
YEAH...
...DR. McCOY WAS A LITTLE LESS HELPFUL THAN I WAS HOPING.
SO YOU REALLY THINK KNOWING ALL THIS MEDICAL STUFF WILL HELP YOU USE YOUR POWERS BETTER?
YEAH. NOW I JUST HAVE TO READ UP FOR THE NEXT *THOUSAND YEARS.*
ULTRA
YOU SHOULD JUST HAVE ONE OF THE CUCKOOS DUMP THE INFO FROM DR. McCOY RIGHT INTO YOUR BRAIN.
ANATOMY
THAT'S HOW ALL THE X-MEN KNOW HOW TO FLY JETS AND SPACE-SHIPS AND SPEAK CHINESE WHEN THEY NEED TO. THEY CHEAT.
HEY, NERDS! WE'RE BEING CALLED TO THE AUDITORIUM. THE O*N*E WANT TO KILL US OR SOMETHING.
ESPECIALLY YOU, VIC.
WHAT?!

--AND THEN MERCURY AND X-23 WERE FIGHTING IN THE HALL, BUT THEN THEY WENT TO SALEM CENTER TO GO GET A COFFEE, BUT THEY WOULDN'T LET ROCKSLIDE GO, AND HE WAS SAD, BUT THEN JULIAN WAS LOOKING FOR THEM, AND THEN THERE WAS A LOUD BOOM! AND NOBODY'S SEEN THEM SINCE, AND--
MEGAN, WHAT...COULD YOU REPEAT... I...
HAVE YOU TOLD ANYONE ABOUT THIS?
UM, YEAH, I'M TELLING YOU. RIGHT NOW.
AREN'T YOU GUYS, LIKE, THE R.A.'S NOW?
WHAT IS AN "R.A."?
SOORAYA...
...WHERE ARE JULIAN AND LAURA?

NEW YORK CITY.
AAAAAAHH!
DAMMIT, LAURA!!
AAAAAAAHHHHHH!
BOOOM

WHAT DID I SAY?!
I SAID NO MORE KILLING! YOU PROMISED!
HE IS NOT DEAD. YOU SAVED HIM.
THIS ISN'T FUNNY, LAURA!
HE DIDN'T KNOW WHERE CESSILY IS...NONE OF THESE GUYS DO. WE HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE MANSION AND--
NO. THERE IS ONE PERSON WHO WILL KNOW.

WE'RE WASTING OUR TIME!
NO, WE ARE NOT. NOW, JUST DO AS I'VE ASKED.
WHO ARE WE EVEN MEETING HERE?!
JULIAN, PLEASE BE QUIET...
STOP RIGHT %#$#ING THERE, PUNK.
THE NAME, DEAD BOY, IS THE OWL.
REMEMBER IT FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE...
...WHICH SHOULD BE ABOUT THREE MORE SECONDS.

AAAIIEEEEEE!!
SHMMMMMMM!
NNNNNNN!
SHMMMMMM!
WAIT...THERE IT IS. ANDERSON, GIVE ME BIOFEEDBACK ON THE CONTAINMENT TUBE.
SHOULD WE STOP THE LASER?
NO.
HNN...HN... PLEASE...
LIFE SIGNS NEGATIVE, SIR. THE SEPARATED MATTER IS DEAD.
MISS KINCAID, YOUR METALLIC FORM IS DETERMINED TO PUT UP A FIGHT.
DOUBLE THE LASER POWER. RUN THE CYCLE FASTER. WE NEED THE SAMPLE *ALIVE*.

VMMM
NO...NO, PLEASE... PLEASE DON'T--
AAAAAHHH!
SHRAKK!
HNNNN!
CRASH!
HT!
DAMMIT! CONTAINMENT'S BEEN BREACHED! TAKE HER DOWN.
HKK!

UH, GOD. MY CHEST.
H-HELP... HELP ME...
WAIT... LOOK.
H-HARKINS... PLEASE...
SOMEONE GET A BIO-CONTAINER.
AMAZING. ***ORGANIC METAL.*** LOOK AT IT, ANDERSON. IT'S ALIVE.
LOOK HOW IT MOVES...IT'S TRYING TO ***HEAL.*** IT WANTS TO BOND TO AN ORGANISM... TO FLESH.
PLEASE... C-COLD...
WE'RE PROCEEDING TO STAGE THREE. PREPARE FOR SAMPLE REPLICATION, AND PREP THE SUBJECT.
OH, AND SOMEONE GET ANDERSON A MEDIC.

THE KINGPIN'S FAVORITE ASSASSIN COMING TO ME AND BEGGING FOR HELP. MY, HOW THE TABLES HAVE TURNED.
WE JUST WANT INFORMATION, SCUMBAG, WE'RE NOT LOOKING FOR ANY TROUBLE.
SPEAK TO ME AGAIN, BOY AND I'LL CHEW YOUR TONGUE AND EYES RIGHT OUT OF YOUR HEAD.
JULIAN, STOP TALKING.
NOW, OWL, DO YOU HAVE THE INFORMATION WE'RE LOOKING FOR OR NOT?
YOU DARE TALK TO ME LIKE THAT? THE RESPECT YOU SHOWED FISK, YOU WILL SHOW IT TO *ME*, LITTLE GIRL!
YOU ARE ONLY IN CONTROL OF KINGPIN'S TERRITORY BECAUSE HE LEFT THE COUNTRY. YOU WILL REMAIN IN POWER ONLY UNTIL HE RETURNS OR SOMEONE KILLS YOU.
SO NO, I WILL NOT SHOW YOU THE SAME RESPECT.
YOU'RE DEAD, GIRL! YOU AND YOUR PRETTY BOYFRIEND ARE *DEAD!*

KILL THEM.
NOW.
VMMMM
CRASH!
AAAAAHHH!
THE FIRST RULE OF NEGOTIATION: KNOW WHO YOU'RE DEALING WITH.
THE KINGPIN TOLD ME THAT.
TELL ME WHERE THE FACILITY IS OPERATING OUT OF...
...OR WE'LL SEE IF THIS OWL CAN FLY.

...NNNN...
WAKEY, WAKEY, MISS KINCAID.
PLEASE...
YOUR NAME IS HARKINS, RIGHT? WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME? WHAT DO YOU WANT? JUST TALK TO ME.
WHAT DO WE WANT? THE FACILITY I WORK FOR IS A **BUSINESS**, MISS KINCAID. WE PROVIDE OUR CLIENTS WITH WEAPONS. IN FACT, YOUR FRIEND X-23 IS ONE OF OUR BEST CREATIONS.
OUR CURRENT CLIENT WANTED US TO CREATE A VERY SPECIFIC ITEM, TO DO A VERY SPECIFIC JOB. HE LEFT IT TO US AS TO HOW TO PROCEED.
HE DID, HOWEVER, OFFER TO SUPPLY US WITH A SINGLE CRUCIAL INGREDIENT THAT WAS NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE WEAPON.
UNFORTUNATELY, YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS KILLED HIM BEFORE HE COULD DELIVER US THE MATERIAL.
HISSSS
STRYKER...
INDEED. SO THAT IS WHY WE CAME TO COLLECT YOU, MISS KINCAID. YOU ARE THAT FINAL INGREDIENT.
OH MY GOD. THAT THING...
IMPRESSIVE, ISN'T IT? I'M CALLING IT "PREDATOR X."
ALL IT NEEDS NOW IS SKIN. YOUR SKIN.

NONO NONONO... PLEASE, DON'T... DON'T DO THIS.
SHHH, IT'S OKAY...IT'S OKAY...WE DON'T NEED ALL OF YOUR FLESH AND IT'S VERY LIKELY YOU'RE GOING TO SURVIVE!
WHICH IS GOOD, BECAUSE THE CREATURE WILL BE HUNGRY WHEN THE BONDING PROCESS IS COMPLETED.
FIRE IT UP.
MMMMMMMM
PLEASE... YOU DON'T HAVE TO--
AAAIIIIEEEEE!

HASN'T THE O*N*E LEARNED ANYTHING AFTER THE 198 INCIDENT?
DOES VAL COOPER KNOW ABOUT THIS? THE STUDENTS ARE NOT PRISONERS HERE, AND I WILL NOT--
WE ARE SIMPLY TRYING TO PROTECT YOU!
CYCLOPS... YOU AND I HAVE BOTH FAILED THESE KIDS. AND I DON'T INTEND TO LET THAT HAPPEN AGAIN.
COLONEL REYES!
SCOTT... YOU SHOULD HEAR THIS.
COLONEL...AGENT HERRERA, HE WAS TAILING MERCURY AND X-23, BUT--
YOU HAD AN AGENT FOLLOWING MY STUDENTS?
HERRERA'S DEAD. THE COFFEE SHOP THEY WERE IN...IT'S BEEN DESTROYED.
THE GIRLS?
MISSING.
KITTY, FIND SURGE AND DAVID, THEN--
WAIT. I HAVE EMMA.
SCOTT...I'M WITH MISTER ALLEYNE. HELLION, X-23 AND MERCURY ARE ALL OFF SCHOOL GROUNDS. MEET US IN CEREBRA.
AND HAVE SOMEONE GO COLLECT SURGE BEFORE SHE GETS HURT.

YOU'VE GOT ABOUT ONE SECOND TO GET OUT OF MY WAY.
LOOK, KID...DON'T DO THIS. SOMETHING'S GOING DOWN, AND WE HAVE TO KEEP YOU ON THE CAMPUS GROUNDS.
WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU, NORI. LET'S JUST FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING, AND THEN--
ROCKSLIDE... SIC HIM.
AWWW, YEAH. I LIKE YOU MORE AND MORE EVERY DAY, ASHIDA.
HEY!! X-BABIES!
KNOCK IT OFF AND COME INSIDE. WE'VE GOT INFO ON CESS AND LAURA. YOU'RE GOING TO WANT TO HEAR IT.

THE NEW YORK/VERMONT BORDER.
I DON'T KNOW YOU, LAURA...
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT YOU.
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU?
I DON'T KNOW.

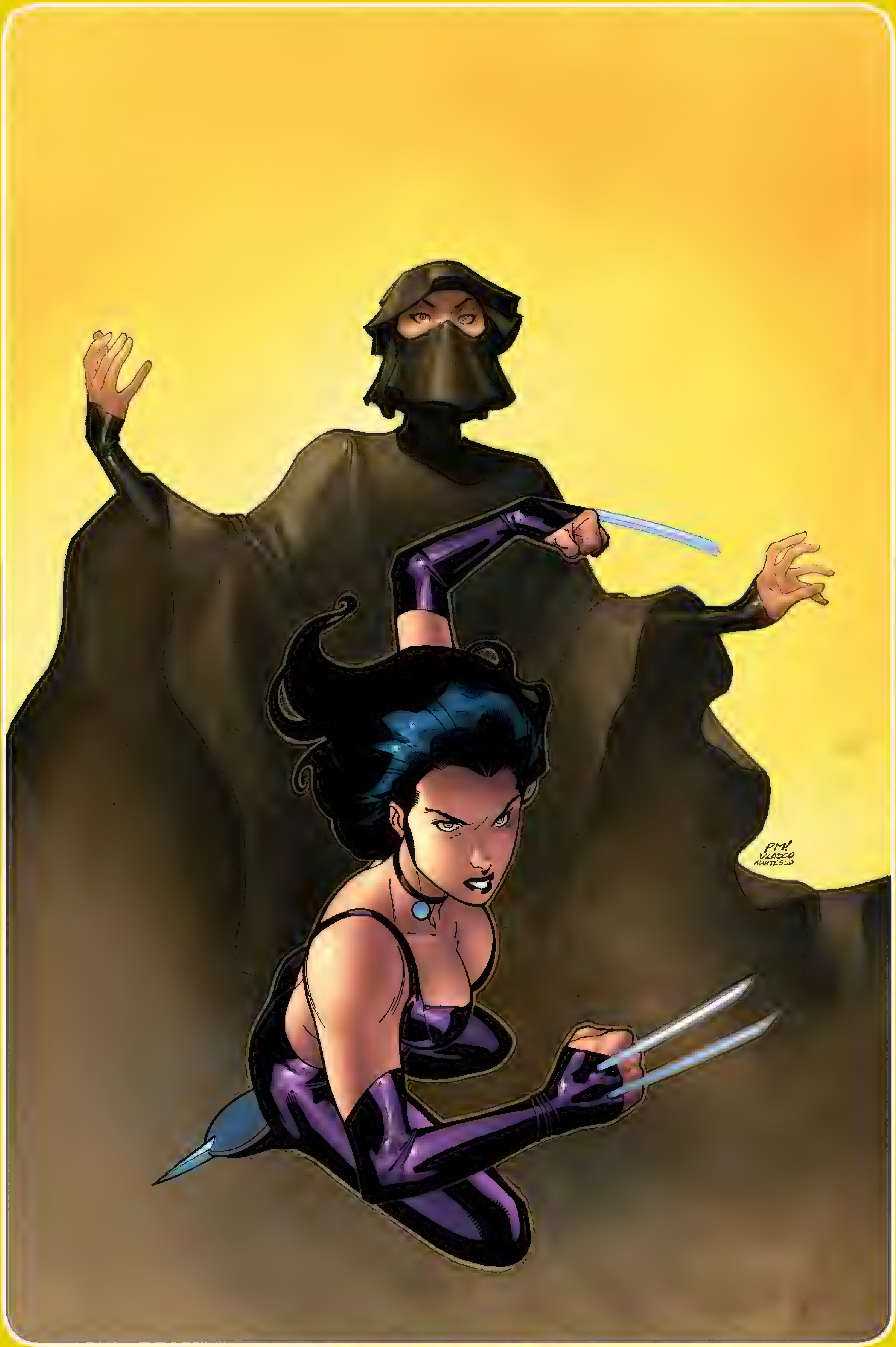
DO YOU HAVE THEM?
I'M PIECING IT TOGETHER NOW. X-23 AND MERCURY LEFT THE SCHOOL TO GO INTO SALEM CENTER AFTER... AN INCIDENT.
ONYXX SAW X-23 RE-ENTER AN HOUR LATER FROM THE ENTRANCE TO THE MORLOCK TUNNELS.
SHE WAS COVERED IN BLOOD.
WHY DIDN'T HE REPORT IT?
ONYXX HAS... *ISSUES,* COLONEL REYES.
I'M ACTIVATING CEREBRA NOW. YOU MAY WANT TO HOLD ONTO SOMETHING, COLONEL.
NH
VT
MA
RI
CT
NJ
DE
MD
DC
US Virgin Islands
NH
V
ME
MA
RI
NY
CT
NJ
DE
MD
DC
CESSILY ISN'T SHOWING UP. DAMMIT!
WHAT ABOUT JULIAN AND X-23? MAYBE IF YOU CAN FIND THEM, THEY'LL--
UNLESS YOU HAVE ANY OTHER OBVIOUS ADVICE, MR. ALLEYNE, I'D LIKE TO CONCENTRATE NOW.
SORRY.
I HAVE THEM.

"THEY'RE AT THE NORTHERN BORDER OF NEW YORK.
"THEY THINK THEY KNOW WHERE CESSILY IS."
SHE'S BEEN CAPTURED... BY THE PEOPLE WHO CREATED X-23. THE CHILDREN ARE GOING AFTER CESSILY.
HELLION! ST--
--OP. GONE. THEY'RE BOTH GONE.
I'VE LOST THEM.
DAVID, PREP THE BLACKBIRD. WE'RE GOING AFTER THEM.
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
DON'T LET ALLEYNE FLY! HE SUCKS!
LET THE O*N*E HELP, CYCLOPS.
WE KNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT TRACKING MUTANTS.

HHH... HT...
...HELP... ME...
RRRRRR...

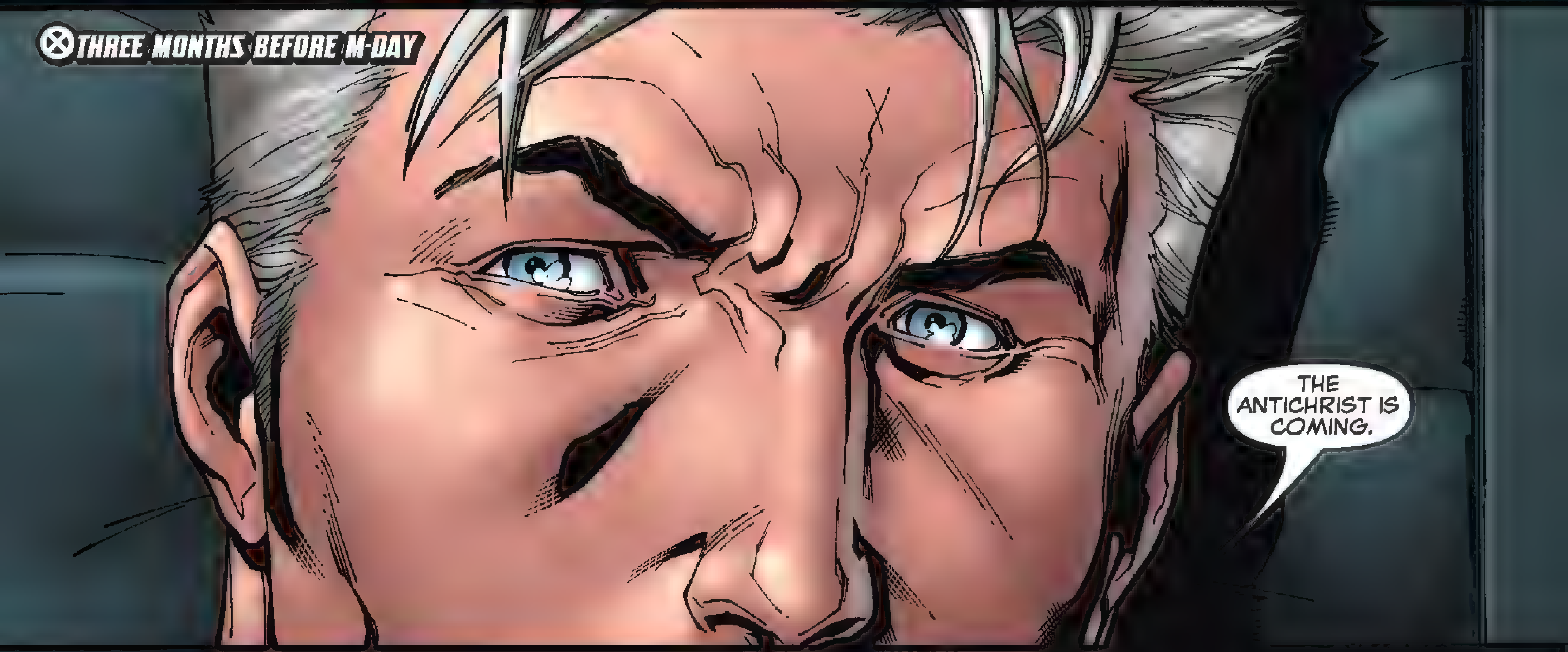
CONTACT RISMAN AND TELL HIM THAT THE CREATURE SHOULD BE READY FOR DELIVERY WITHIN THE WEEK.
AND TELL HIM THAT WE WENT AHEAD AND M--
RRRMMMMBBLE!
--WHAT?!
ALERT! ALERT! PERIMETER BREACH!
ALL SECURITY PERSONNEL REPORT TO BUILDING ONE.
WHAT IS GOING ON?!
...
SOMEONE REPORT, DAMMIT! WHERE'S KIMURA?!
KIMURA, REPORT! WHAT'S HAPPENING DOWN THERE?!
RELAX, HARKINS.

IT'S NOTHING WE CAN'T HANDLE.


PM!
VLASCO
MARTEGOD

NEW X-MEN 36

“MERCURY FALLING” PART 4 OF 4


THREE MONTHS BEFORE M-DAY
THE ANTICHRIST IS COMING.

MERCURY FALLING

Part 4 of 4

ADAM HARKINS, FACILITY SCIENTIST.
I'M SORRY, COULD YOU REPEAT THAT?
THE *WHAT* IS COMING?
THE REVEREND WILLIAM STRYKER.
THE LORD HAS SHOWN ME A VISION OF THE NEAR FUTURE, MISTER HARKINS, WHEN THE CHILDREN OF SATAN WILL BE DECIMATED.
YOU'RE SPEAKING OF MUTANTS...
INDEED. AND WHEN THAT TIME COMES, MY PURIFIERS AND I WILL LEAD THE CHARGE AGAINST THOSE WHO SURVIVE THE LORD'S WRATH. BUT AFTER OUR WAR IS WAGED, WE HAVE SEEN THAT THE DEVIL WILL STRIKE BACK AGAINST US.
SATAN WILL SEND TO THIS WORLD A MUTANT SO POWERFUL, WE ALONE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO STOP IT.
THIS HELLSPAWN MUST BE HUNTED DOWN AND DESTROYED, FOR IF IT SURVIVES, HUMANITY MAY ONCE AGAIN LOSE CONTROL OVER EDEN.
YOU PAINT A VERY GRIM PICTURE OF THE FUTURE, REVEREND.
THAT IS WHY THE LORD HAS BROUGHT US TO YOU, MISTER HARKINS. GOD SEEKS YOUR HELP IN SAVING HIS KINGDOM.
CAN YOUR FACILITY CREATE THE WEAPON WE NEED?
A BIOLOGICAL WEAPON THAT SEEKS OUT AND FEEDS ON MUTANTS...
YES.
I'M A MAN OF SCIENCE, NOT FAITH, REVEREND... BUT IF YOUR CHECK CLEARS, WE CAN BUILD YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT.

NOW...
KILL THEM!
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
STAY CLOSE TO ME!
VMMMMM!
NO NEED TO THANK ME OR ANYTHING.
SKREEE
AAAAHHH!

SKREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
I LOVE TELEKINETICS. THEY'RE SO *OVER-CONFIDENT*.
MIND POWERS ARE USELESS WHEN YOU CAN'T FORM A THOUGHT.
SKREEEEEEEEEEE
FEELS LIKE YOUR BRAIN IS TURNING TO MUSH, DOESN'T IT? WELL, TRUST ME...IT'S NOTHING COMPARED TO WHAT THE POOR LITTLE CLONE IS FEELING.
NNNNN!
SKREEEEEEEE
SO X, YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A BOYFRIEND. I'M IMPRESSED...BUT YOU'VE GOT A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT FIRST DATES.
KEEP WATCHING, HANDSOME! YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS.
SKREEEEEEEE
WELCOME HOME, X.
CHOK!
NOOOOOO!

SMASH!
DO YOU HEAR ME?!
YOU'RE *DEAD!*
KILL HER, JULIAN.
LAURA?
DO IT.
YOU HAVE TO KILL HER.
WHAT?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
KIMURA'S BODY IS INDESTRUCTIBLE, I CAN'T KILL HER BUT YOU CAN.
CREATE A TELEKINETIC BUBBLE INSIDE HER BRAIN, OR HEART...
YOU HAVE TO DESTROY HER INSIDES.

SHE'S A MONSTER...SHE DESERVES TO DIE.
NO, I-I CAN'T...
YOU HAVE TO DO IT...NOTHING ELSE WILL HURT HER!
SHE'S RIGHT ABOUT ME. TOO BAD YOU AND I BOTH KNOW YOU DON'T HAVE THE STONES TO DO ME IN, KID.
CAN'T BE HURT, HUH?
GOOD TO KNOW.
VVMMMM!
=AAAHHH!=
BOOM
WE HAVE TO BE BETTER THAN THEM, LAURA.
NOW LET'S FIND CESSILY.
27.3 MILES AWAY
CRASSH!

CESS!
BOOM!
OH MY GOD. CESS, IS THAT YOU?
CESSILY! TALK TO ME!
COME ON, CESS! COME BACK TO ME!
JULIAN... SOMETHING IS WRONG.
CESSILY'S SCENT...IT'S EVERYWHERE.
YOU CAN DO THIS, CESSILY! PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, DO YOU HEAR ME?!
CESSILY!
JUH-JULIAN?
PLEASE... MAKE THEM STOP. MAKE THEM STOP HURTING ME...
THIS IS WRONG.
JULIAN, WE HAVE TO LEAVE NOW!

RRRRROAR!
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS THING?!
HSSSSSS!
CHUNK!
YEAAARGHH!
AHHH!
JULIAN!
SHRIPPPP!
LAURA... MORE THAN ONE...
"LOOK AT THEM, ANDERSON... THEIR HUNGER FOR THE X-GENE IS INSATIABLE. IT'S AS IF THEY'RE AWARE THAT THEY'LL DIE WITHOUT IT..."

...AND WHILE *X-23'S* ARRIVAL WAS UNPLANNED, SHE'LL BE THE PERFECT TEST RUN FOR THE CREATURES.
"IT'LL BE GOOD TO HAVE HER BACK IN OUR POSSESSION... PROVIDED SHE SURVIVES, OF COURSE.
"SEE THAT? THE MERCURY NOT ONLY BONDED, BUT CHANGED THE BIOLOGY OF THE HOST CREATURE.
"THE KINCAID GIRL PROBABLY DOESN'T EVEN KNOW HOW POWERFUL SHE IS."
"SIR, SHOULDN'T WE BE GOING?"
"THE CLONE JUST CUT ONE...
"LOOK AT HOW IT RE-FORMS. THE CREATURES WON'T STOP THE ATTACK UNTIL THEY'VE CONSUMED EVERY DROP OF MUTANT BLOOD.
"THIS IS OUR FINEST CREATION, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF."
SIR, PLEASE!
FINE, ANDERSON... WE'LL GO. ONCE THE CREATURES FINISH HERE THEY'LL MOVE ON TO OTHER FEEDING GROUNDS...
...AND IF THE REVEREND'S "ANTICHRIST" REALLY DOES EXIST, THEY'LL FIND IT.

RRROOAR!
LAURA...
YOU HAVE TO TAKE CESSILY AND RUN.
I WILL HOLD THEM OFF AS LONG AS I CAN.
NO. NOT LEAVING YOU.
CESSILY IS IN SHOCK. YOU WILL PASS OUT SOON FROM BLOOD LOSS. YOU HAVE TO RUN.
WE ALL GO, OR NONE OF US DO.
VMMMMM!
CHOOOOM

THEY'RE IN THE LABS, WE NEED REINFORCEMENTS AT THE--
THOK!
UT!
COME ON, CESS... COME ON...
THERE WAS A HELICOPTER IN THE HANGAR. IF WE CAN GET TO IT--
NO. THEY'RE COMING.
OH, LAURA... LAURA...THEY TOOK PART OF ME.
MY FLESH... THEY NEED MY MERCURY...
PLEASE DON'T LET THEM TAKE ME BACK...
I WON'T.
SNIKT
SNIKT

RRRAAR!
CHOK!
SHLUK
SSSS!
SPLOORCH
NNYEARGH!

LAURA...
VMMMMM!
FWASH!
UHN!
HAVE TO RUN...GET UP, JULIAN...
GET UP!
THEY TOOK PART OF ME...
HHHNN...

CESSILY! WE HAVE TO RUN!
CESSILY!
HKKKKK
CESSILY!!
TAKE THEM DOWN!
RRRMMMBBLE
SNIKT

WHAT THE--?!
SHRAAKK!

X-MEN! TAKE THEM DOWN!
ZARK!
SANTO! SOORAYA! GET TO CESSILY!
HSSSS!
ERRRR--
ZZZRRRRXX
BOOM!
I SEE CESSILY!
DUDE! THERE'S EVIL ROBOT GRIZZLY BEARS IN HERE! THAT RULES!
PETER! WATCH OUT!
AAAHHH!
CHOK!
COLOSSUS... MOVE!!
ERRRR--
SHRAK
HSSSS..

LAURA, ARE YOU OKAY? LAURA?!
SCOTT, WE NEED ELIXIR OVER HERE! HELLION'S HURT!
WE'RE OKAY, CESS...WE'RE GONNA BE OKAY...
YOU'RE SAFE NOW.
JULIAN...
I'M HERE, JULIAN. DON'T BE SCARED.
DO I LOOK SCARED, %*@&$^?
YOU WERE RIGHT. I SHOULD HAVE LEFT THE SCHOOL.
LAURA, I--
NOW CESSILY WILL NEVER BE THE SAME...

SHORT TIME LATER...
THERE WERE MUTANT CORPSES IN THE VARIOUS LABS.
THEY WERE BEING EXPERIMENTED ON.
THEN WE DID NOT HURT THESE PEOPLE ENOUGH, COLONEL.
MERCURY SAID THERE WAS A SCIENTIST NAMED HARKINS...ANY SIGN OF HIM?
NO...WE TOOK IN GRUNTS AND LOW LEVEL SCIENTISTS, BUT NO UPPER LEVEL PEOPLE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE STRYKER DID THIS... EVEN AFTER THE BASTARD DIES, HE'S STILL HURTING US.
SO WHAT DID YOU EVEN DO WHILE DUST AND I WERE TAKING GUYS DOWN? OH, RIGHT, YOU "PHASED." AWESOME.
GEEZ, FOLEY, I WONDER IF WE'LL EVER GET TO BE REAL X-MEN LIKE MISS PRYDE HERE. IT SEEMS *REALLY* HARD.
DON'T MAKE ME KILL YOU, VACCARO.
HERE YOU GO, CESS.
JULIAN, ONE OF THOSE... *THINGS*...GOT AWAY.
NO ONE KNOWS THAT FOR SURE. THEY'RE SWEEP--
I KNOW...
I CAN FEEL IT.
GRRRR...

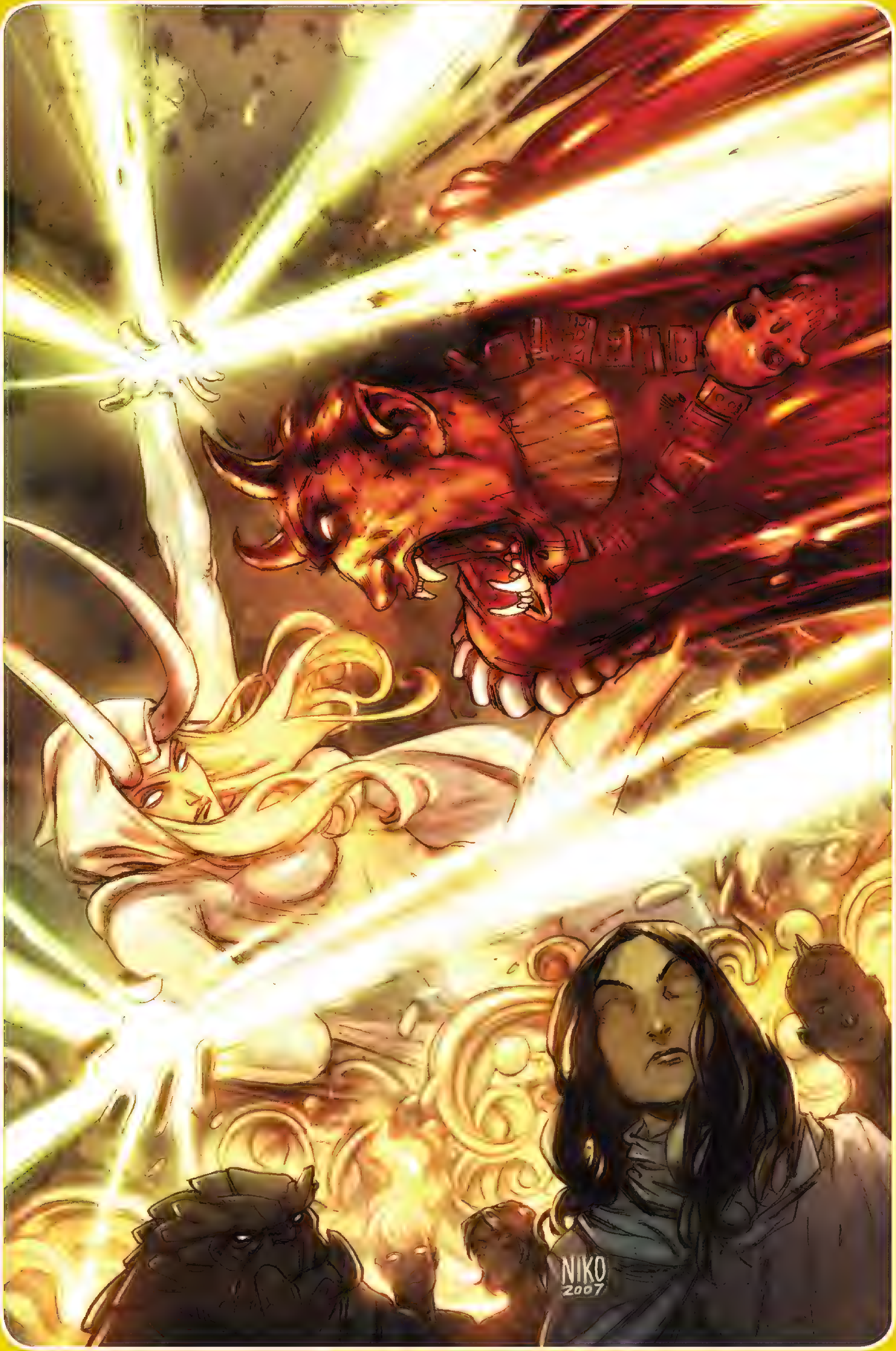
EPILOGUE ONE
THE XAVIER INSTITUTE
NOK! NOK!
SOORAYA SAID YOU WANTED TO TALK TO ME.
I JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU. FOR SAVING ME.
AGAIN.
THOSE PEOPLE...THE FACILITY.
WHAT THEY DID TO ME...
DID YOU REALLY SPEND YOUR WHOLE LIFE THERE?
YES.
IT HURTS...
I KNOW.
OH GOD, LAURA...THEY HURT ME SO BAD!
IT HURTS SO MUCH!

YOU'RE DEAD, CLONE.
DO YOU EVER WONDER WHY YOU TAKE SUCH PLEASURE FROM ABUSING A LITTLE GIRL WHO CANNOT HURT YOU, LET ALONE DEFEAT YOU?
NO, I THOUGHT NOT. YOU'LL NOTICE THAT YOU CANNOT **MOVE.** I'VE SHUT DOWN ALL OF YOUR MOTOR CONTROL SO THAT YOU CAN **LISTEN** WHILE I **ENLIGHTEN** YOU.
YOU ARE A **BULLY,** PLAIN AND SIMPLE. A PRODUCT OF YOUR PAST...
HTT!
BEING KICKED AROUND YOUR WHOLE LIFE BY AN ALCOHOLIC FATHER AND AN UNCARING MOTHER AT HOME, ONLY TO FIND THE SAME WAITING FOR YOU FROM YOUR PEERS IN THE SCHOOLYARD, DAY IN AND DAY OUT.
YOU WERE BORN INTO A LIFE YOU DID NOT DESERVE...A LIFE NO CHILD DESERVES...
SOMEONE NEEDS TO FILL THE ROLE OF VICTIM AND YOU PLAYED THAT PART FOR SO MANY...UNTIL YOUR GRANDMOTHER CAME TO YOUR RESCUE.
SHE CALLED YOU HER "SWEET CHILD." SHE DID EVERYTHING SHE COULD TO UNDO THE DAMAGE EVERYONE ELSE HAD DONE.
BUT SADLY, SHE CAME TOO LATE. ALL THE HOPE AND GOOD YOU HELD ONTO WAS BEATEN OUT OF YOU LONG AGO.

AFTER YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S HEART ATTACK, YOU FOUND YOUR WAY TO THE FACILITY, TO THE MEN THAT COULD GIVE YOU WHAT YOU WANTED SO BADLY...*REVENGE.*
A HOLLOW PRIZE, BUT ONE YOU BEGGED FOR. AND ONCE YOU'D GOTTEN THE BEST OF THOSE WHO WRONGED YOU, YOU BECAME THE VERY PERSON YOU HATED AND FEARED GROWING UP.
AND X-23 PLAYED THE ROLE OF YOUR VICTIM.
LIKE YOU, LAURA DIDN'T DESERVE THAT HORRIBLE LIFE. NO CHILD DOES, REMEMBER? BUT YOU DIDN'T CARE.
EVEN THOUGH YOU KNEW ALL TOO WELL THE PAIN SHE SUFFERED, YOU ENJOYED INFLICTING IT.
YOU STILL ENJOY IT.
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE A BULLY.
WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS?
BECAUSE TODAY YOU GO BACK TO BEING THE VICTIM.
IT'S A SHAME THE PEOPLE THAT PERFECTED YOUR BODY DIDN'T DO ENOUGH TO SAFEGUARD YOUR MIND...
MEMORIES ARE QUITE AMAZING. DID YOU KNOW THAT NO TWO ARE THE SAME? FOR EXAMPLE, SOME ARE WOVEN THROUGH THE MIND AND BURIED DEEP INSIDE A PERSON'S PSYCHE.
LAURA'S PROGRAMMING TO TRIGGER SCENT IS LIKE THIS. I FEAR I MAY NEVER BE ABLE TO PULL THAT CONDITIONING FROM HER.

OTHER MEMORIES, ARE MORE LIKE STAINS THAT TAINT THE MOMENTS AROUND THEM. PAIN, LOSS AND DEATH ARE NORMALLY THE MEMORIES THAT POISON THE THOUGHTS THAT SURROUND THEM.
AND THEN THERE ARE THOSE THAT RISE ABOVE THE REST. THESE ARE THE THOUGHTS THAT COME TO US FIRST WHEN WE THINK OF THOSE WE TRULY HATE AND LOVE... LIKE THOSE OF YOUR GRANDMOTHER.
NO...WAIT... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
YOU'VE TAKEN THOSE THAT X-23 LOVED FROM HER, NOW I'M RETURNING THE FAVOR.
AND JUST LIKE, THAT SHE'S GONE...
WHAT--WHAT HAPPENED?
I'VE TAKEN YOUR GRANDMOTHER FROM YOU...THE ONLY PERSON WHO EVER SHOWED YOU LOVE AND KINDNESS... AND IN HER PLACE, I'VE LEFT A DEEP VOID THAT WILL CAUSE YOU PAIN FOR A LIFETIME.
NOW BEFORE I LET YOU GO, I HAVE A MISSION FOR YOU.
YOU'RE X-23'S HANDLER? NOW YOU WILL "HANDLE" YOUR MASTERS AT THE FACILITY. EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM, BEGINNING WITH HARKINS.
GOODBYE, KIMURA.

EPILOGUE TWO
GERMANY
KRACK!
CHOOOM!
HELP ME... SOMEONE PLEASE...
HE'S BACK.



NEW X-MEN 37

"THE QUEST FOR MAGIK" PRELUDE

THE XAVIER INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER LEARNING.
NOW...
...AND THAT'S HOW I DEFEATED THE SENTINELS, SENT APOCALYPSE AND HIS HORSEMEN RUNNING, TOLD XAVIER TO GO TO HELL...
...SAVED HELLION FROM WOLVERINE AND HIS MAGIC SWORD, SCORED WITH LADY MASTERMIND, DEFEATED THOSE VAULT DUDES AND SAVED THE CUCKOOS FROM THE PHOENIX FORCE.
AND, UM, THE WORLD-THINGY.
COOL!
HE'S MAKING IT UP, NICK.
YOU WEREN'T EVEN THERE WHEN THE X-MEN SAVED THE CUCKOOS!
OH, YEAH? OH, YEAH? WELL, YOU COME UP WITH A BETTER STORY!
IF YOU TOOLS WANT ANY CHANCE OF MAKING IT ON-TO THE TEAM, YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO LEARN TO SUCK UP BETTER!
BLINDFOLD? DID YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?
SHE DOES, YES, THANK YOU. YOU NEED TO KNOW, PLEASE. YOU NEED TO KNOW WHY.
YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW IT BEGAN.

The demon lord came from hell to take the girl, yes. He wanted her innocence, her soul to appease his dark masters, to let them enter our realm and feast.
A fellowship of heroes fought to win her back.
They failed.
The girl fell to darkness. Now the demon lord was her master.

WHOA.
GEEZ, BLINDFOLD...
UM, GOOD STORY. IT'S DONE, RIGHT? PLEASE?
THE HEROES FEARED SHE WAS LOST, THEY DID. THEN SHE APPEARED BEFORE THEM ONCE MORE, BUT CHANGED.
OLDER. DARKER. CHANGED. HER SOUL WAS NOW STAINED BLACK.
GUESS NOT.
THEY DIDN'T REALIZE, EXCUSE ME, THAT TIME WAS DIFFERENT THERE. THAT FOR THE MINUTES SHE WAS GONE, THE GIRL WAS TRAPPED IN HELL FOR YEARS.
OKAY, BUT WAS THE GIRL HOT?
SANTO!!

NNN...NO... PLEASE...
SHHHH, CESS... IT'S OKAY. YOU'RE SAFE NOW. YOU'RE JUST DREAMING.
HOW'S SHE DOING, JULIAN?
I DON'T KNOW. SHE WAKES UP SCREAMING.
WE GOT HER OUT OF THERE, BUT SHE WON'T TELL ME... SHE WON'T TELL ME WHAT THEY DID.
SHE'S TOUGH, ASHIDA. SHE'LL GET THROUGH IT. RIGHT?
YEAH. OF COURSE SHE WILL.
HEY, DO YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE A BREAK? I NEED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOMETHING.
YEAH. YEAH, SURE.
I'VE GOT A FEELING IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG NIGHT ANYWAY.

And in the time she was trapped, yes, so began the demon lord's tutelage of the stolen child.

For seven years, he raised her as his own. He taught her the dark arts, gave her a taste of the power within her.

But piece by piece, he shattered her soul. From the shards, he created BLOODSTONES to allow his masters entry to our world.

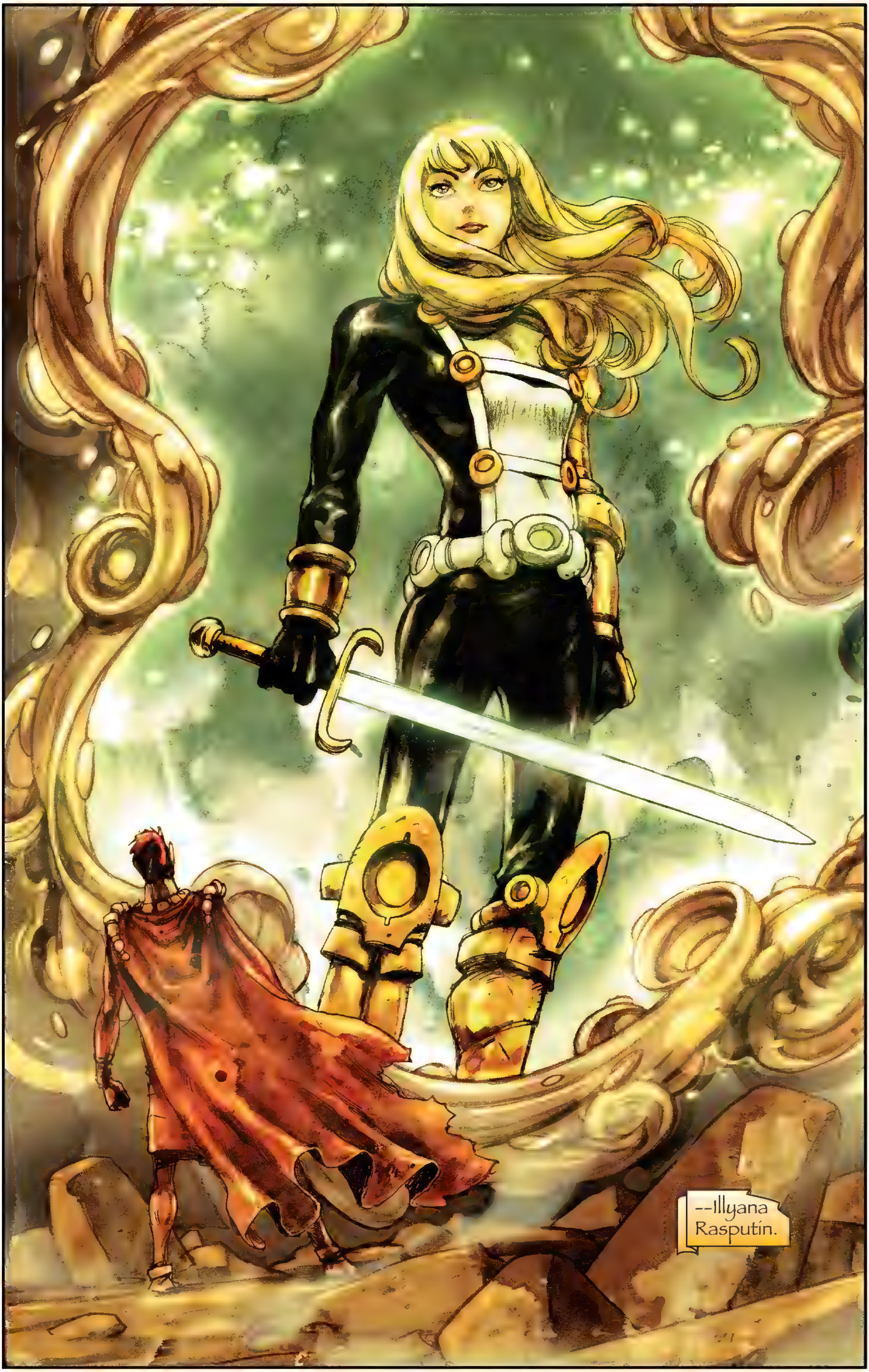
She struggled to resist the darkness growing within her. And she was not alone in her struggle against the demon lord.
Several of the girl's heroes had remained in limbo, where their bodies and souls were twisted by the realm's darkness. They helped the girl rebel against the demon lord.
She forged a SOULSWORD and rose up against her master, banishing Belasco from Limbo.

BANISHED? YOU SHOULD HAVE HAD HER CUT OFF THE GUY'S HEAD OR SOMETHING. WITH BLOOD SHOOTING UP FROM HIS NECK.
THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN WAY MORE GNARLY.
ROCKSLIDE, THIS... I THINK THIS IS REAL. I READ ABOUT THIS IN THE X-MEN'S FILES.
BELASCO AND THE SOULSWORD, I MEAN...THOSE ARE REAL THINGS. THIS IS SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED TO THE X-MEN.
HEY, MY STORY HAPPENED TOO. ESPECIALLY THE PART ABOUT LADY MASTERMIND.
WILL YOU SHUT UP ALREADY ABOUT THAT?!
YOU'RE TOTALLY JEALOUS, LIZARD BOY!
DO YOU GUYS SMELL SOMETHING BURNING?
VERY FUNNY, NICK.
SHE'S A PRECOG, SANTO!
WELL, IF SHE'S TELLING STORIES ABOUT THE PAST, THEN SHE'S A RE-COG!
EXCUSE ME, COULD YOU PLEASE LOWER YOUR VOICES? I AM ATTEMPTING TO MEDITATE.
NO, YOU SHUT UP!!
ESPECIALLY YOU, ROCK PERSON. YOUR VOICE GRATES.
SHHH!! QUIET, NEZHNO! BLINDFOLD IS TELLING A STORY.

THIS WILL END BADLY.
SHHH!! AND NO, IT'S NOT GOING TO "END BADLY." THIS IS GOING TO WORK. TRUST ME.
YOU SAID YOU COULD DO IT, RIGHT? ANYTHING ABOUT GENETICS, HUMAN AND MUTANT BIOLOGY, MEDICINE, ANYTHING YOU CAN GET.
BUT DOCTOR McCOY ALREADY IS UNEASY AROUND US, AFTER WHAT HAPPENED.
IT'LL BE FINE!
WE SHOULD DO IT. WE WERE GOING TO DO IT FOR DAVID. THERE'S NO DIFFERENCE.
DAVID WOULD HAVE BEEN AWAKE.
DOCTOR McCOY IS A TEACHER. HE'D WANT JOSH TO LEARN ALL HE COULD.
UT!
I...I DIDN'T KNOW.
I DIDN'T KNOW.

Belasco waited, yes. He waited for an opportunity to steal his apprentice back.
And then, something he was not expecting... she died.
When Belasco returned to Limbo to collect more souls for his masters, a human sorceress had taken the mantle of Magik.
The Black Sun faded. He was defeated yet again. The Elder Gods exiled him.
Punished him.

But even exiled to the hellish realms beneath, Belasco was not without power. And he sensed something happening in the worlds of light above him.
With a blood sacrifice of a minor demon, he was able to access old magics. The simplest of spells.
And through his spell, he saw two siblings force all of reality to change. And he saw his apprentice...


--Illyana Rasputin.

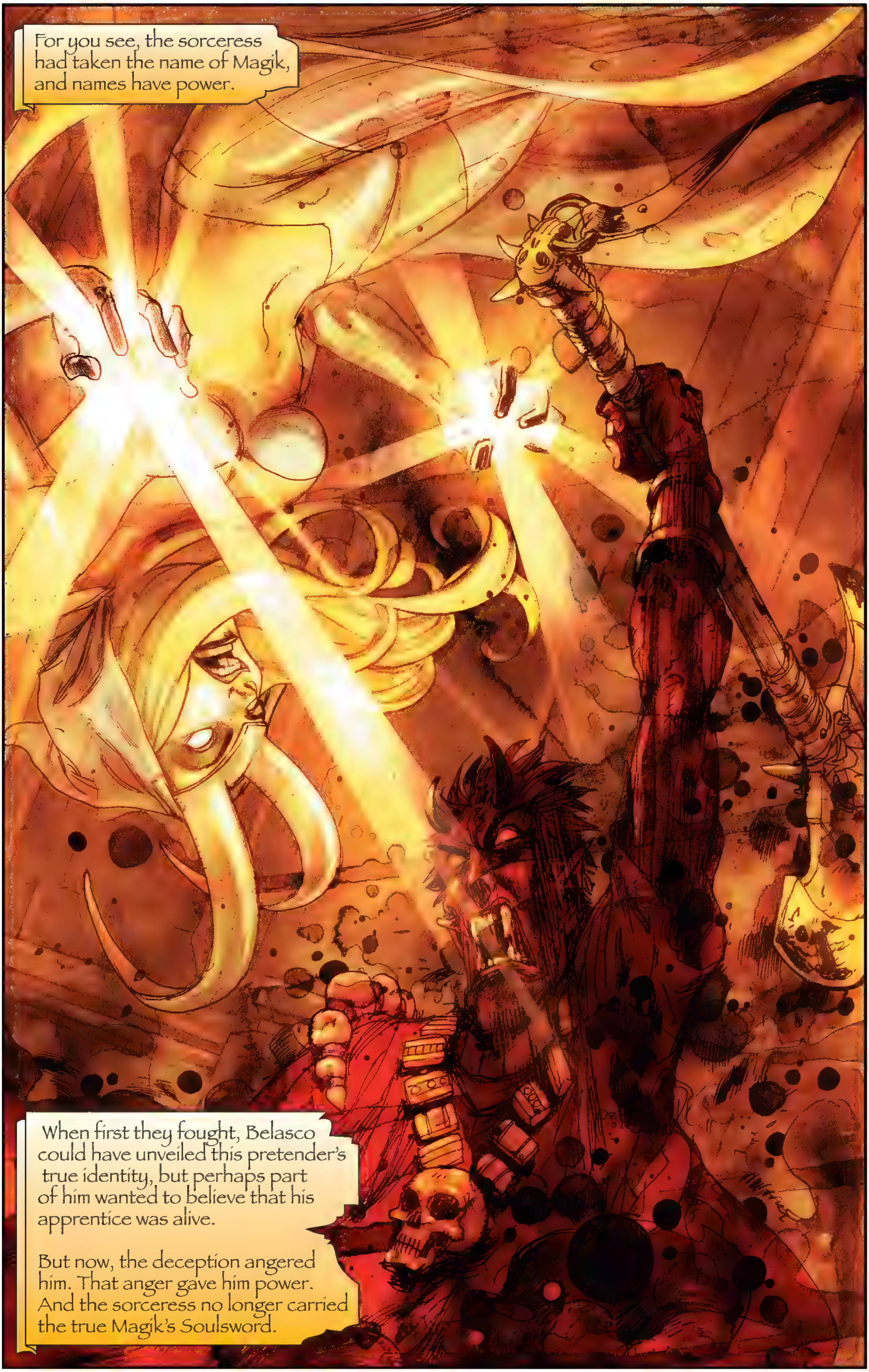
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT...HE SAW ILLYANA RASPUTIN?
YOU MEAN COLOSSUS' SISTER? ISN'T SHE, YOU KNOW, DEAD?
BLINDFOLD, WHAT KIND OF STORY ARE YOU TELLING US? IS THIS REALLY HAPPENING?
SO IF COLOSSUS' SISTER IS IN THE STORY, IS CYCLOPS? BECAUSE THAT'D BE THE BEST.
THE DEMON LORD'S APPRENTICE LIVED ONCE AGAIN...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND... WHAT DID SHE MEAN, "REALITY CHANGED"? IN THE STORY, OR IN REAL LIFE? WOULDN'T WE HAVE NOTICED THAT?
WHO IS THIS ILLYANA AGAIN? IS SHE REAL, OR NOT?
WHO'S "COLOSSUS"?
...BUT THEN, JUST AS SUDDENLY AS ILLYANA HAD REAPPEARED AMONG THE LIVING TO THE EXILED BELASCO, SHE DISAPPEARED ONCE MORE.

For one brief moment, though, Belasco felt her. Now gone, hidden somehow in the light realms, he thought, the demon lord began his quest to take back what was his.
And so he began the journey through the dimensional veils to Limbo.

But Belasco's return to Limbo would not go unchallenged. The hellish realm Belasco had molded into own image over the years had changed. It was now in the hands of a soul not so black as his.

And she sensed him coming. The moment he stepped foot into Limbo, she turned the land itself against the demon lord.
As well as Limbo's denizens.

For weeks, Belasco cut his way through the demons of Limbo, every bloody step taking him closer to the sorceress who overtook his throne.
While she sensed him, he sensed her as well. She was a light in the darkness of Limbo.
But she had no idea the rage that Belasco would unleash on her.


For you see, the sorceress had taken the name of Magik, and names have power.
When first they fought, Belasco could have unveiled this pretender's true identity, but perhaps part of him wanted to believe that his apprentice was alive.
But now, the deception angered him. That anger gave him power. And the sorceress no longer carried the true Magik's Soulsword.

Overwhelmed by the ancient demon lord's power and rage, the sorceress was defeated, and expelled from Limbo through the dimensional veil.
In truth, it mattered not to Belasco whether she had lived or died. She did not matter now.
Amanda Sefton fell, she fell to Earth two days ago.

Limbo was under the control of Belasco once more, and the land became darker than ever before, yes. He resurrected his demon army this morning, and looked up toward the light realms.
He could not sense his apprentice anymore, but instead smelled her faint scent on the children last with her, the children inhabiting the X-Men's mansion above.

HE THINKS WE KNOW WHERE SHE IS, YES.
THE DEMON LORD IS COMING FOR US.
I DON'T LIKE YOU ANYMORE.
OH MY GOD.
THAT IS ONE FREAKY CHICK.
SHE SAID THAT AMANDA SEFTON WAS DEFEATED TWO DAYS AGO!! THIS IS HAPPENING!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? IT'S JUST A STORY.
THIS IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW! WE HAVE TO TELL CYCLOPS... WE HAVE TO GET THE X-MEN!
ARE WE GOING TO BE OKAY?
NO, THANK YOU. I AM SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS, MEGAN.
WHAT?!
WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE RIGHT N--

AAAAAAAAHHHHH!

NEW X-MEN 38

"THE QUEST FOR MAGIK" PART ONE OF FOUR

SEVEN MINUTES EARLIER...
NO... NO... PLEASE, PLEASE NO...
PLEASE, STOP HURTING ME...
CESSILY KINCAID, MERCURY
LIQUID MERCURY SHAPE-SHIFTER
SHE'S A PRECOG, SANTO!
WELL, IF SHE'S TELLING STORIES ABOUT THE PAST, THEN SHE'S A RE-COG!
SANTO VACCARO, ROCKSLIDE
ROCK BODY, DETACHABLE LIMBS
<...CREATED ME AND I AM YOUR SERVANT, AND I AM ON YOUR PATH AS BEST I CAN. I SEEK REFUGE IN YOU FROM ANY EVIL I HAVE COMMITTED. I CONFESS TO YOUR BLESSINGS UPON ME, AND I CONFESS TO YOU MY SINS...>
SOORAYA QADIR, DUST
SAND FORM
LAURA X, X-23
SUPERHUMAN HEALING, ENHANCED SENSES, ADAMANTIUM CLAWS

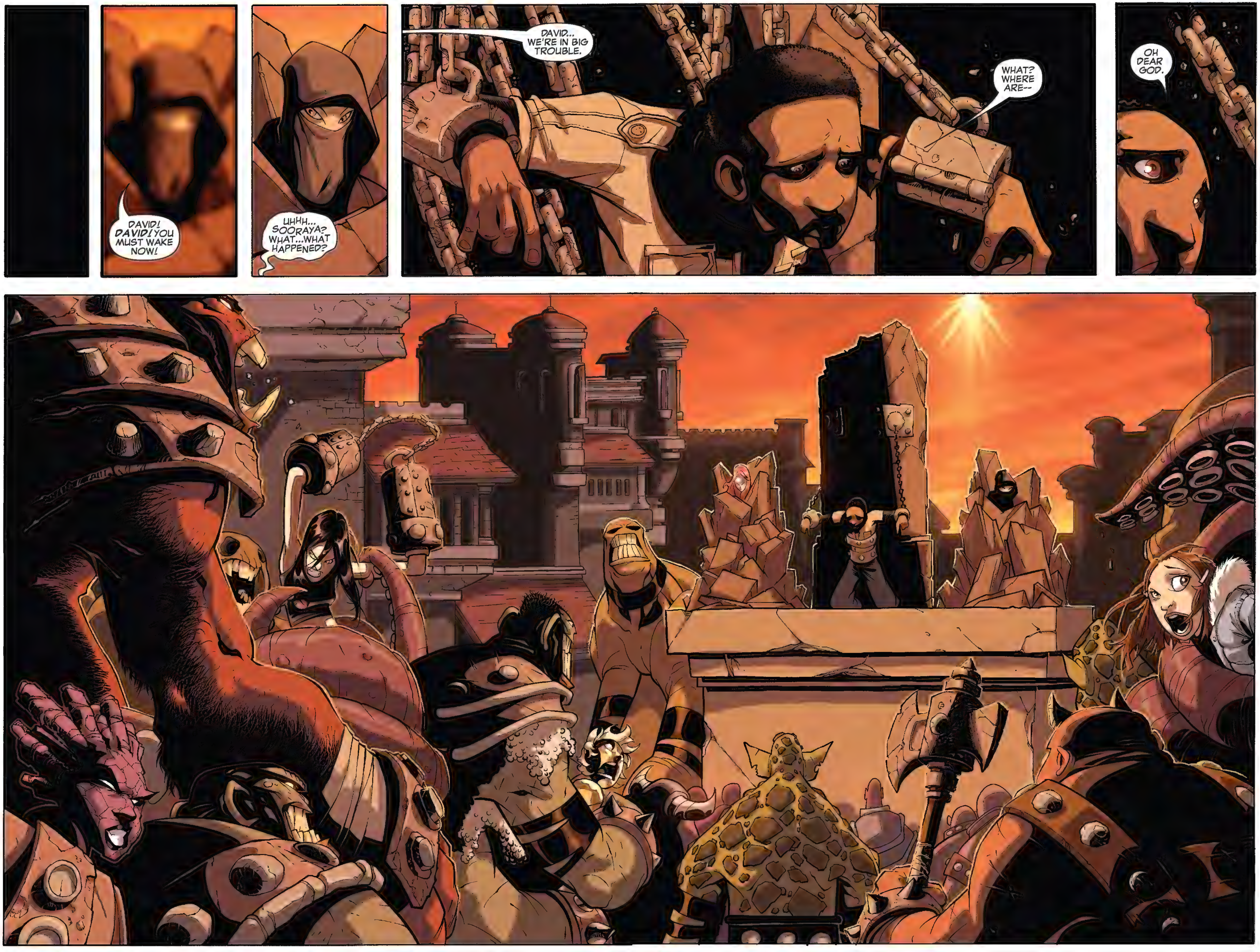
JOSH FOLEY, ELIXIR
BIOMANIPULATION
DAVID...
NORI AND JULIAN WENT OUTSIDE TO TALK. SHE WOULDN'T TELL ME WHAT WAS UP.
I THINK SHE MIGHT--
DAVID ALLEYNE, HUMAN
JOSH? WHERE ARE YOUR SHOES? ARE YOU OKAY?
I DON'T KNOW. I MEAN, I KNOW EVERYTHING. I KNOW...I ALWAYS KNEW, BUT NOW...
I'M GOING TO TOUCH YOUR EYES.
WHAT? JOSH, WHAT ARE YOU--
AAAH!
IT'S OKAY. I KNOW WHAT TO DO NOW.
WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOU, JOSH? WHY WOULD YOU--WHY--
WHY ARE YOU BLURRY?
MY VISION... YOU FIXED IT.
I KNOW.

22 HUNDRED HOUR SWEEP IN PROGRESS...
ALL STUDENTS ACCOUNTED FOR, AS WELL AS THE X-MEN "A" TEAM...
O*N*E SENTINEL MEGATON
HANG ON... TWO STUDENTS ARE ON THE FRONT STEPS... ASHIDA AND KELLER.
BE ADVISED, MEGATON, BOTH STUDENTS ARE RED-FLAGGED. UPGRADE ALERT STATUS.
ALEXANDER LEXINGTON, PILOT
THEY'RE JUST TALKING, COMMAND. BESIDES, ASHIDA'S A GOOD KID.
KELLER'S A $#^@%, AND DIDN'T ASHIDA THREATEN TO ATTACK YOUR SENTINEL THE OTHER DAY?
IT WAS A MISUNDERSTANDING, OKAY? THEY'RE JUST KIDS.
...KILLED HIM RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME, SHE DIDN'T GIVE IT A SECOND THOUGHT. SHE'S GOT MOB CONNECTIONS, AND THIS PLACE, THIS FACILITY...I THINK SHE'S SERIOUSLY MESSED UP, ASHIDA.
YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD THE WAY LAURA TALKED ABOUT THIS WOMAN, KIMURA. THE LOOK IN HER EYES...
JULIAN KELLER, HELLION
TELEKINETIC
KELLER...
NORIKO ASHIDA, SURGE
ELECTRICAL ABSORPTION AND DISCHARGE
SHUT UP!
UHN!

WHAT THE HELL IS THE MATTER WITH YOU?! WHAT'D YOU DO THAT FOR?!
YOU COULD HAVE DIED!
NORI?!
DON'T YOU EVER DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT AGAIN WITHOUT TELLING ME, DO YOU HEAR ME? DO YOU HEAR ME?!
THEY'RE MY RESPONSIBILITY! YOU ARE MY RESPONSIBILITY!
YOU COULD HAVE DIED, CESSILY COULD HAVE DIED, LAURA COULD HAVE DIED, AND I WASN'T THERE!
THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN, DO YOU HEAR ME?!
YEAH, I HEAR YOU... NORI...
NORI, ARE YOU O--

KA-BOOOOOM!
-SHOOOM!
AAAAHHH!
UHNNN!
MEGATON TO O*N*E COMMAND, WE HAVE A SITUATION!

KELLER!
I'M ON IT!
HANG ON, I'M COMING! I'M--
AAARGHH!
FWASH!
UFF!
I... I DON'T... I COULDN'T GET THROUGH. IT'S LIKE THERE WAS A WALL THERE...
THIS ISN'T HAPPENING... THIS IS NOT HAPPENING...
DAVID!


DAVID! **DAVID!** YOU MUST WAKE NOW!
UHHH... SOORAYA? WHAT...WHAT HAPPENED?
DAVID... WE'RE IN BIG TROUBLE.
WHAT? WHERE ARE--
OH DEAR GOD.

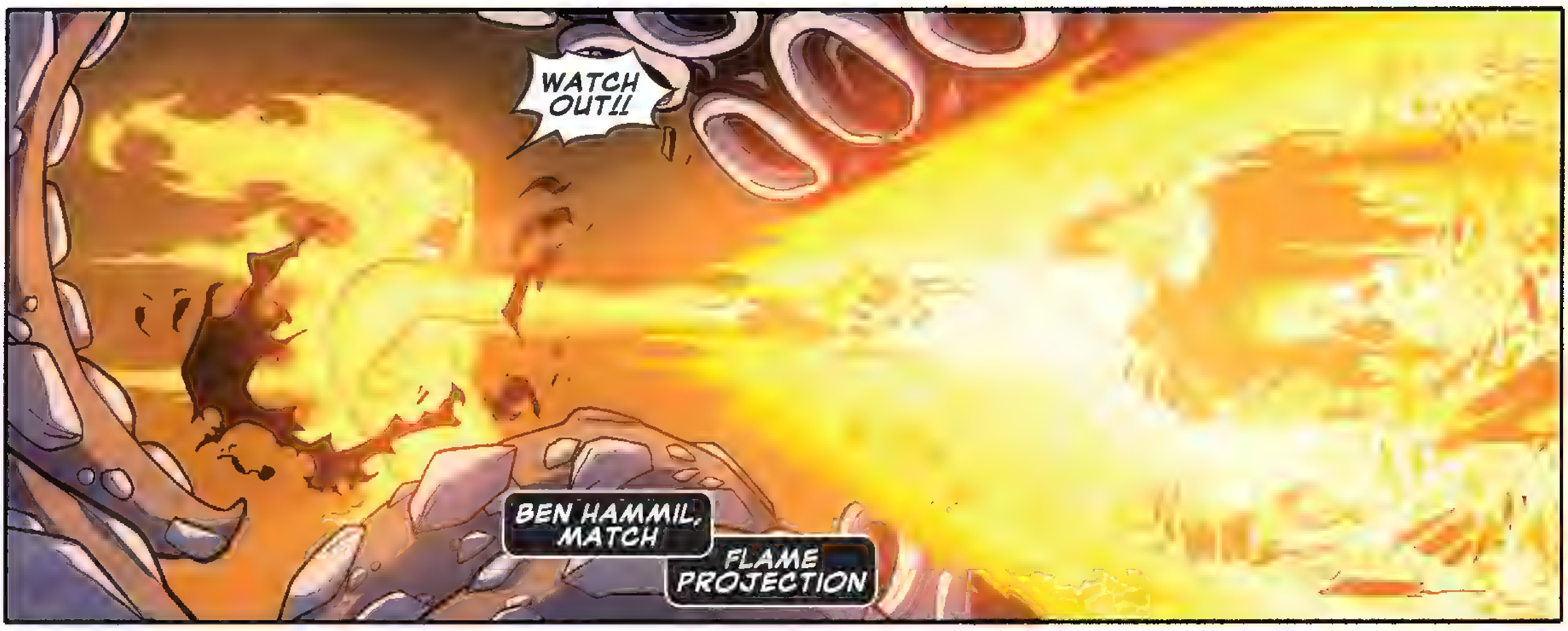
THIS...THIS IS BAD. ALL I REMEMBER... WAS FIRE. LIKE THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION.
CESS, DID YOU SEE--
I WAS ASLEEP, AND THEN I HEARD SCREAMING. THE CUCKOOS.
THOSE... THOSE THINGS WERE PUTTING THEM INSIDE THOSE HELMETS... THEY HAVEN'T MOVED SINCE.
I THINK THAT'S MARTHA IN THE OTHER ONE.
THEY KNEW TO TAKE OUT THE TELEPATHS. NORI AND JULIAN AREN'T HERE...I TAKE IT YOU GUYS CAN'T USE YOUR POWERS?
GET US OUT OF HERE, DAVID. YOU HAVE TO GET US OUT OF HERE.
CESSILY...
DON'T TELL ME TO CALM DOWN!
GET THESE THINGS OFF OF ME, DAVID!!
CESSILY, STOP! YOU'RE JUST MAKING IT WORSE!
NO... OH, NO...

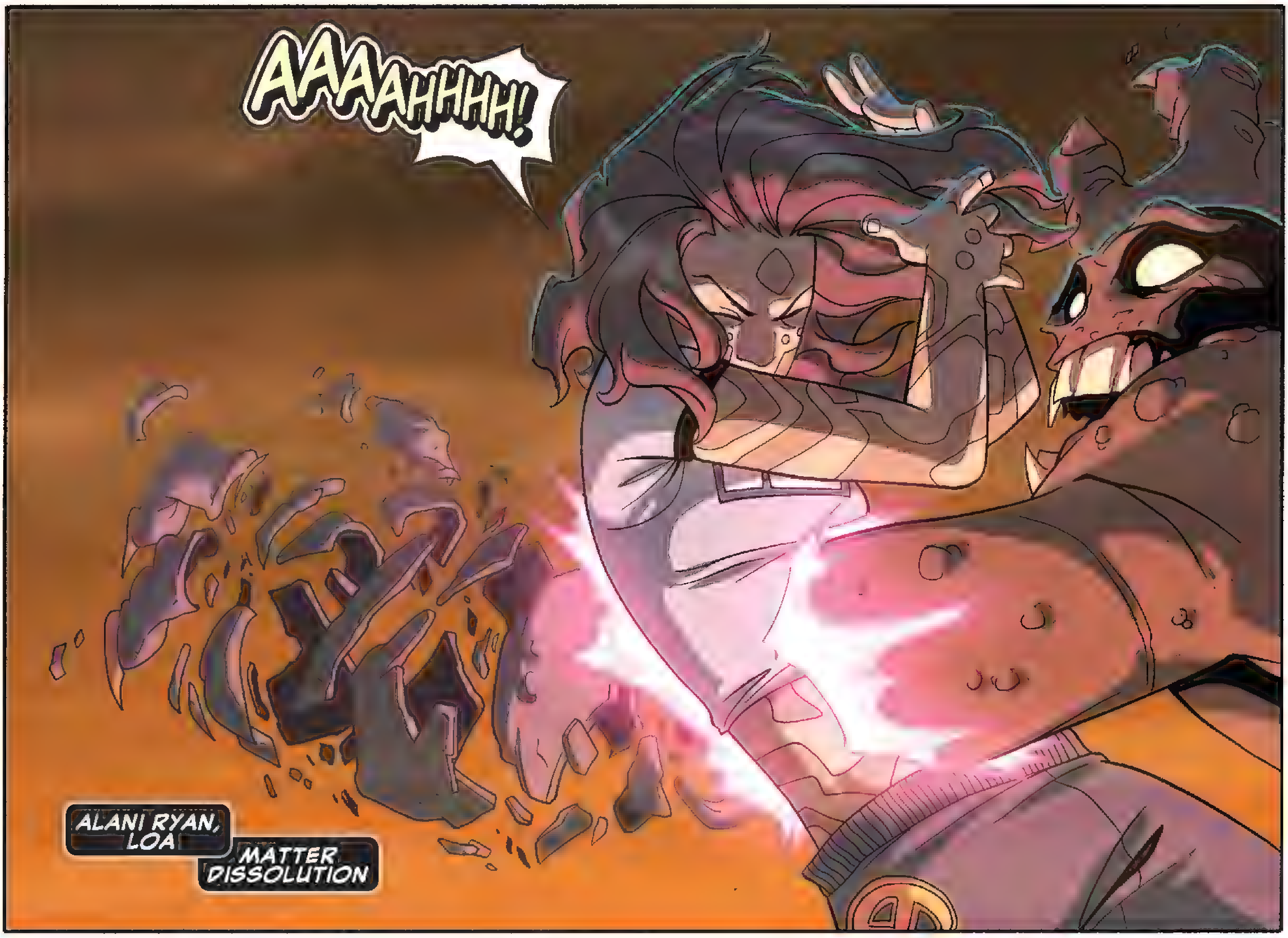
SHAITAN.
WE ARE OUTSIDE OF ALLAH'S SIGHT. WE ARE IN HELL.
DAVID!
WHERE. IS. SHE?
...SHE WHO?
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH US?
YOU WERE WITH HER. I CAN SMELL HER ON YOU, ON ALL THREE OF YOU.
YOU WILL TELL ME WHERE SHE IS, OR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS WILL SUFFER.
AAHH!

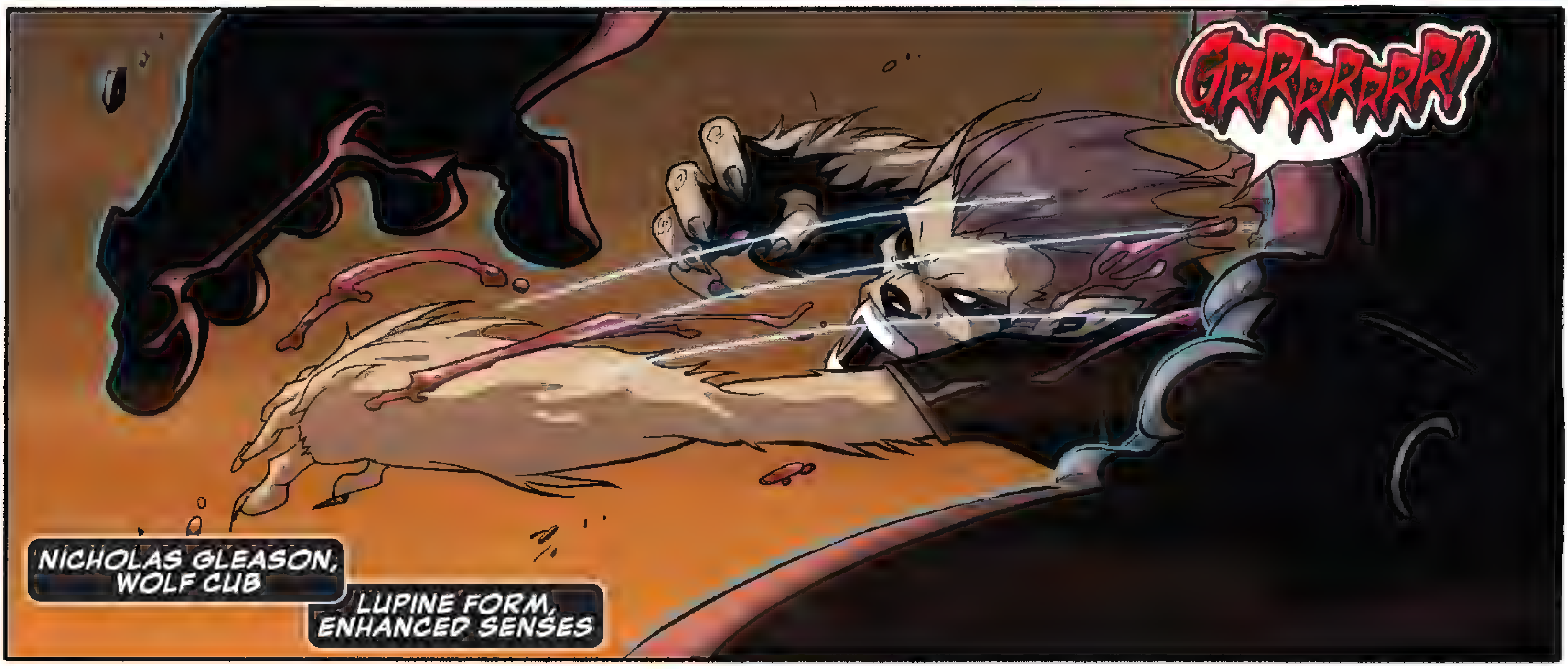
HOPE ABBOTT, ACCORDING TO YOUR FILE YOU ARE AN ASTRAL PROJECTOR.
USE YOUR POWER. GO UP TO WHERE THE LIGHT IS.
...OHGOD OHGODOHGOD... WHAT IS THIS THING TOUCHING ME?!
ARE YOU SERIOUS? GO INTO THE LIGHT? WHAT'S UP THERE?!
THE INSTITUTE.
WHAT?! HOW CAN YOU TELL?
I HAVE EXCELLENT VISION.
SERIOUSLY?!
I CAN FIX THEM.
NO MATTER HOW BAD HE HURTS THEM, I CAN FIX IT.
HE WILL NOT HURT THEM, JOSH. I CAN SEE IT IN HIS EYES.
WELL... GOOD.
YOU MISUNDERSTAND. HE WILL NOT HURT THEM...HE'S GOING TO KILL THEM.

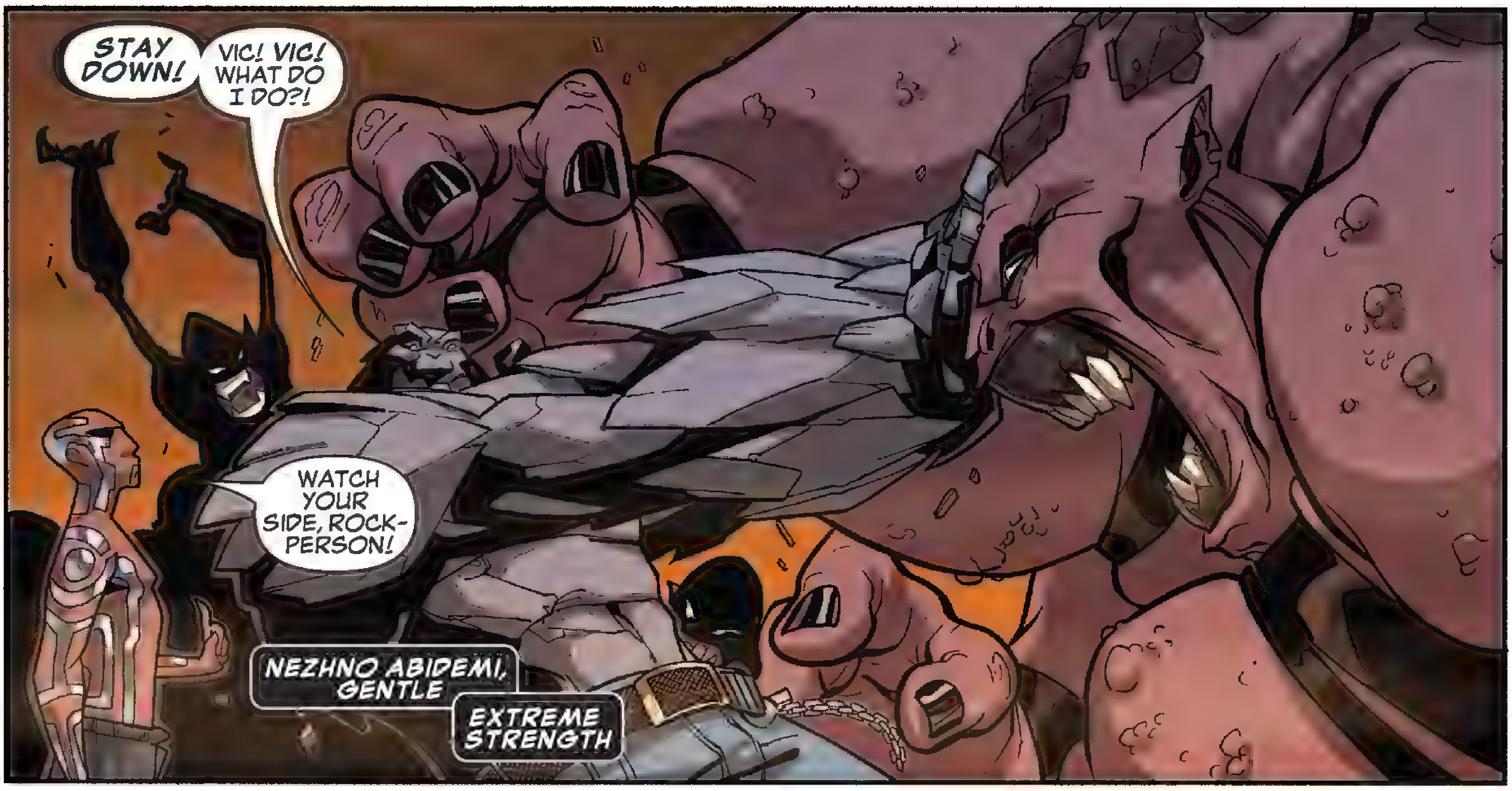
OKAY, WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?
AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE COMMON ROOM? IT LOOKS LIKE CRAP.
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE PROTECTING US, YOU JERK! YOU'RE A "NEW X-MAN!"
SHUT UP! I'M THINKING.
OH, GOD.
SANTO, WE'RE IN TROUBLE HERE, FOR REAL!
WE'RE... WE'RE IN LIMBO.
THE X-MEN WILL COME FOR US, RIGHT?
THEY DON'T EXACTLY HAVE THE BEST TRACK RECORD WHEN IT COMES TO THEIR STUDENTS LATELY, DO THEY?

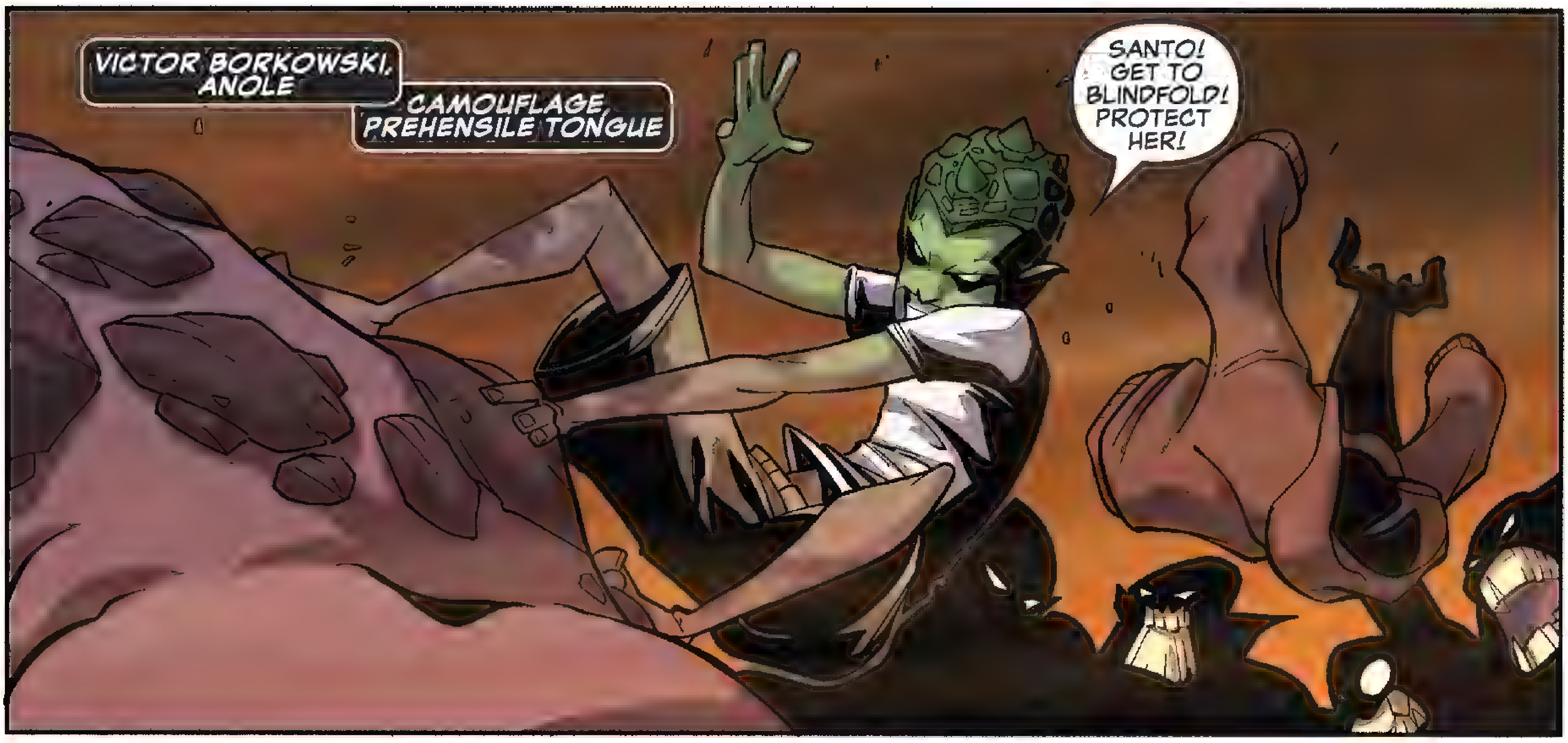
NO PROBLEM, WE'RE OKAY...THIS IS GOING TO BE OKAY...
GIRL... BLINDFOLD...YOU SAW THIS OCCUR WITH YOUR POWER. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
SHE WILL COME. BUT NO, NOT IN TIME.
BLINDFOLD, I AM GOING TO KICK YOU IN THE JUNK IF YOU DON'T SHUT UP. EVERYTHING YOU SAY IS BAD.
ARE YOU INSANE, SANTO? AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE TAKING CHARGE OR SOMETHING?! WHAT IS MISS FROST TEACHING YOU?
LOOK, LIZARD BOY, I JUST HIT STUFF! I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!!
YES, PLEASE, ANOLE. SHE WILL NOT LISTEN TO YOU, BUT YOU HAVE TO SAVE HER. EXCUSE ME, YOU WILL HAVE TO SAVE PIXIE. SHE IS TOO IMPORTANT TO FALL TO DARKNESS.
WHAT?! I--
AAAIIIIIEEE!!!
NO, SHE WILL NOT COME.
SHE WILL NOT COME IN TIME.

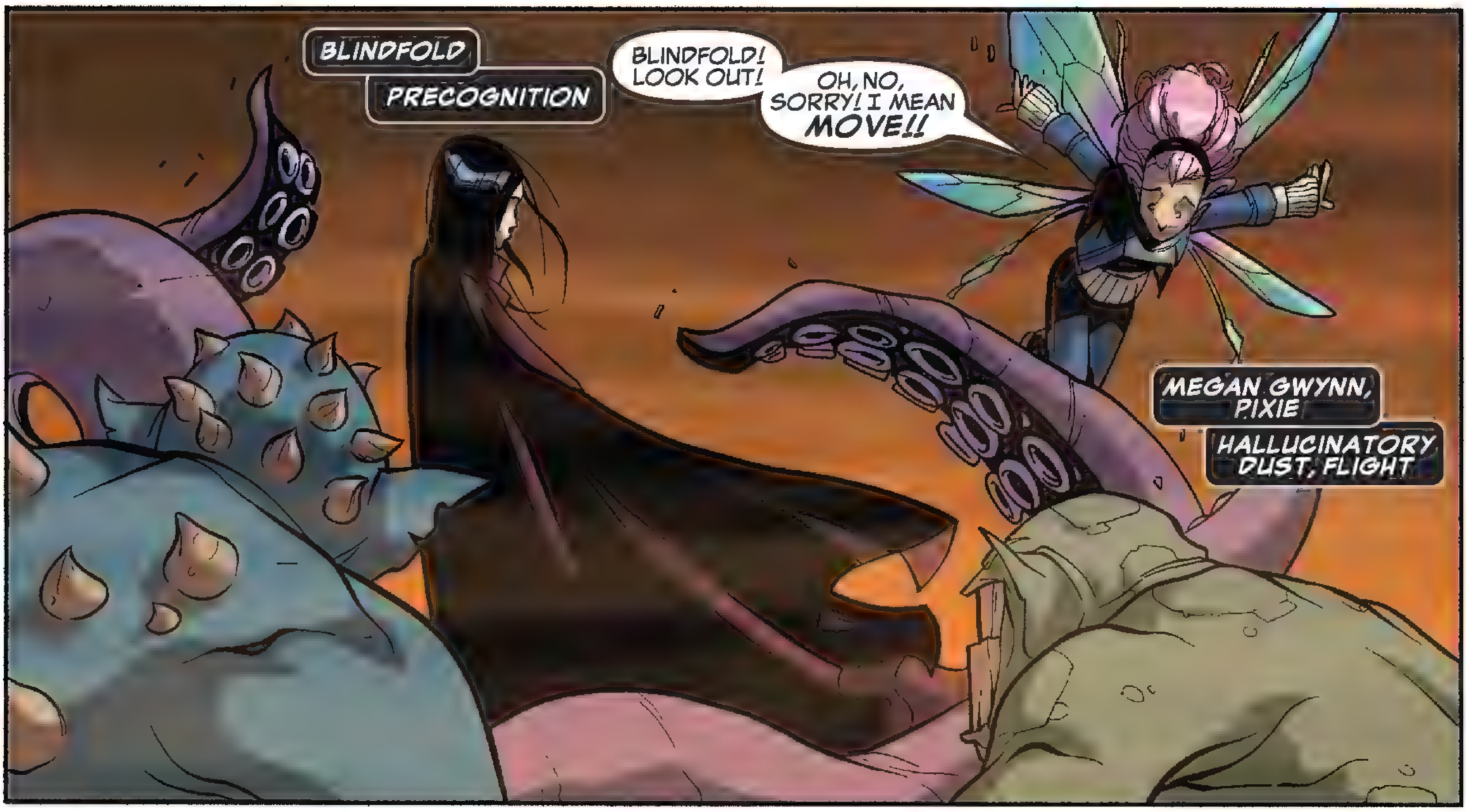

WATCH OUT!!
BEN HAMMIL, MATCH
FLAME PROJECTION


AAAAHHHH!
ALANI RYAN, LOA
MATTER DISSOLUTION


GRRRRRRR!
NICHOLAS GLEASON, WOLF CUB
LUPINE FORM, ENHANCED SENSES


STAY DOWN!
VIC! VIC! WHAT DO I DO?!
WATCH YOUR SIDE, ROCK-PERSON!
NEZHNO ABIDEMI, GENTLE
EXTREME STRENGTH


VICTOR BORKOWSKI, ANOLE
CAMOUFLAGE, PREHENSILE TONGUE
SANTO! GET TO BLINDFOLD! PROTECT HER!


BLINDFOLD
PRECOGNITION
BLINDFOLD! LOOK OUT!
OH, NO, SORRY! I MEAN MOVE!!
MEGAN GWYNN, PIXIE
HALLUCINATORY DUST, FLIGHT

HANG ON!!
FFFFM!
YES, THANK YOU, I WILL.
RRRR?
IT...IT'S WORKING! BRILLIANT! THEY'RE STOPPING!
???
HEY, THEY'RE NOT RUNNING.
EXCUSE ME, WHAT DOES THE PIXIE DUST MAKE THEM SEE?
I HAVE NO IDEA. SOMETHING AWESOME, I BET.
SANTO!! HELP US!
I'M ON IT! EAT FIST, DEMON!!
ROCKSLIDE, STOP PLEASE! NO, IT DOESN'T WORK ANYMORE, PLEASE--

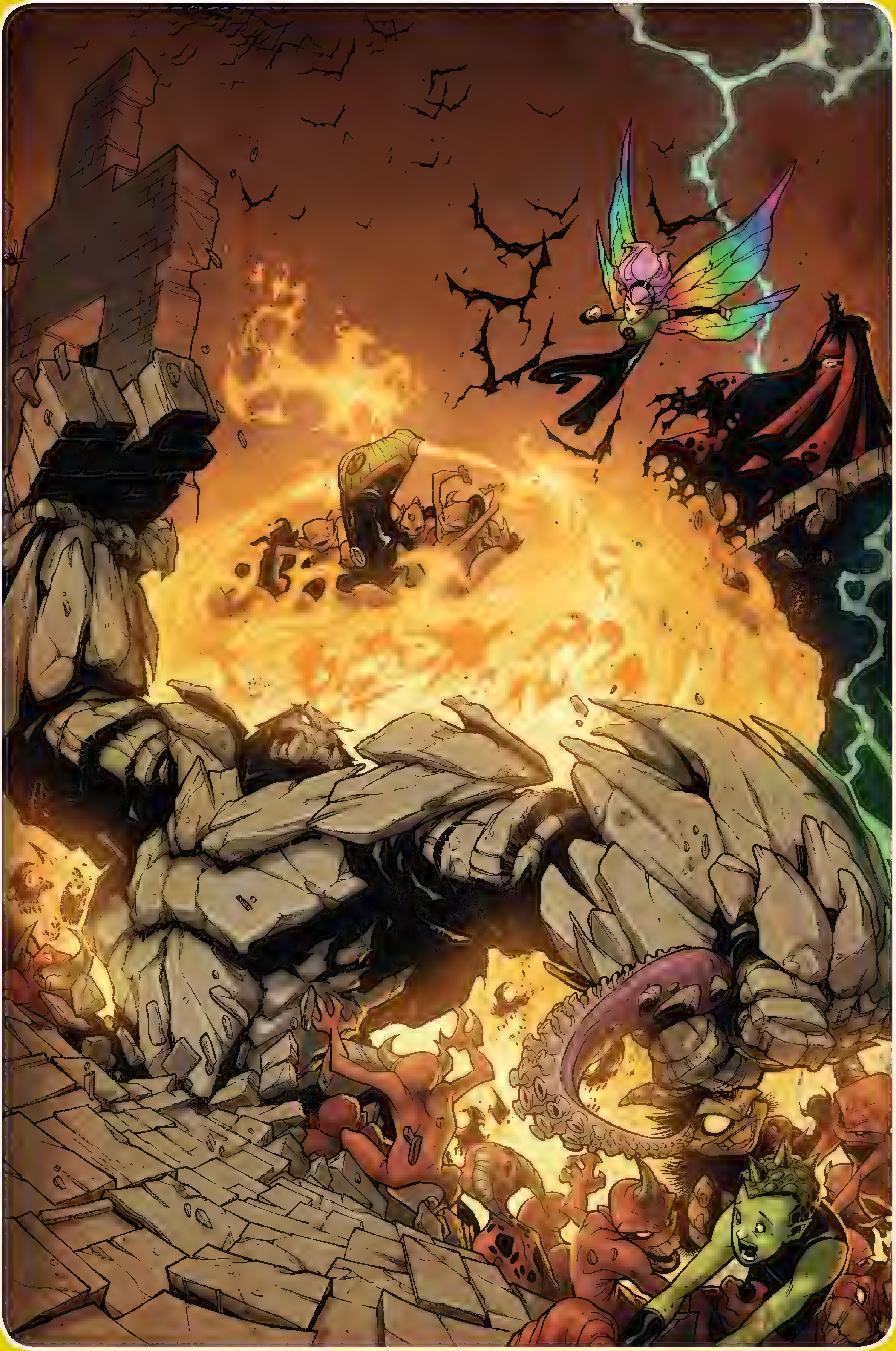
HKKK!
CHOOOOM!
AAAHHH!
SANTO!
EVERYONE, REGROUP AT BLINDFOLD'S POSITION! WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER, WE NEED TO--

AAARRRGHH!
CHOK!!
VICTOR!!
SRRRAAA
AAAAAAAHHH!
SHLUK!
HUK!!

SHE IS HERE.
THE DARKCHILD IS HERE.
HSSSSS...

WHERE IS SHE?!
WHERE IS ILLYANA RASPUTIN?!
ILLYANA... RASPUTIN?
HE KNOWS, MASTER.
CESSILY! SOORAYA! YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!
YOU HAVE TO FIGHT!
I'M SORRY...
ILLYANA RASPUTIN IS DEAD.
YOU LIE.

YOU LIE!
DAVID!!
NOOO!!!
NOW... I'LL ASK AGAIN.
WHERE IS SHE?



NEW X-MEN 39

"THE QUEST FOR MAGIK" PART TWO OF FOUR

DAVID!!
SNIKT
NOOOO!
TRANCE! GO!
PAF!
VMMM!
THOK!
DAVID!
HRM?
THUD

LET ME KILL THEM.
WATCH THE OTHERS. THESE CHILDREN ARE MINE.
OHMIGOD OHMIGOD, DAVID...
SHRACK!
SHNK!
DAVID!
PLEASE DON'T LET ME DIE, PLEASE...
CESSILY, SOORAYA!
YOU HAVE TO FIGHT!

SUPERIOR VENA CAVA, AORTA, PULMONARY ARTERY, VEINS, LEFT AND RIGHT ATRIUM, TRICUSPID-- OH GOD, PLEASE LET THIS WORK.
COME ON!
COME ON!
AAAHH!
NNNNN...

HUP!
SHLUK!
RRRAA!
SHNK!
...!
PITIFUL CHILD...
...YOUR LITTLE CLAWS ARE NOTHING AGAINST THE POWER OF THE ELDER GODS.
AK!
YOUR SOUL ISN'T EVEN WORTH TAKING...IT REEKS OF MAN'S SCIENCE.
YOU ARE NOT EVEN REAL.

SHMMMM!
LAURA!
ONCE AGAIN.
WHERE IS ILLYANA RASPUTIN?

THE WASTELANDS. LIMBO.
THE DARK-WHAT?
BEN! WE HAVE TO GET VICTOR TO A DOCTOR!
HOW?!
WHOA... SHE'S GOT HORNS. AND A TAIL!
IS THAT REALLY COLOSSUS' SISTER?
HSSSS...
BEN...YOU HAVE TO TAKE CHARGE...
I...I CAN'T! I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!
N'ASTIRH.
BRING ME THAT ONE.

OH, NUTS.
SKREEEE!
WATCH OU--OOF!
UHN!
AAAAAIIEEE!
SSSSSS--
WHAM!
HHHKK!!

STAY DOWN, DEMON.
NEHZNO?!
I WILL RIP OUT YOUR--
WHAM!
MEGAN...I CANNOT-- CANNOT HELP YOU ANY--
HT! HUUKK!!
OH, NO! NEHZNO! NEHZNO!
HHNNN!!
THUD!

YOU'RE FIGHTING ME?
I SAVED YOU!
YOU'RE ONLY ALIVE BECAUSE OF ME!
BECAUSE I PULLED YOU AWAY FROM HIM.
IF IT WEREN'T FOR ME, YOUR INNARDS WOULD BE STRUNG ACROSS BELASCO'S CASTLE WALLS RIGHT NOW.
SO IF YOU EVER WANT TO SEE YOUR FRIENDS AGAIN...
...I NEED ONE OF YOUR SOULS.

THE XAVIER INSTITUTE.
EARTH.
AAAARRRGHH!
UHNN!
I CAN DO THIS...RIP THE BUILDING IN HALF...
FWASSHH!
AAAAAHHH!
HOPE!

AM I BACK?! AM I BACK?!
HOPE...HOPE! WHAT'S HAPPENING? IS EVERYONE OKAY INSIDE?
IS EVERYONE OKAY?
HE TOOK US TO HELL! HE'S KILLING THEM! HE'S GOING TO KILL THEM ALL!
HIS NAME WAS BELASCO...
...BELASCO KILLED DAVID...

BELASCO'S CASTLE.
LIMBO.
I WAS ABANDONED BY MY MASTERS, USURPED BY A MORTAL WOMAN...
I WADED THROUGH AN OCEAN OF BLOOD TO TAKE BACK LIMBO...
UHN!
SETTLE DOWN, KID. THE BOSS IS BUSY.
HNNNN!
...AND I WILL NOT BE DENIED.
YOU WILL TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO KNOW!
SOORAYA... I CAN'T...I CAN'T DO THIS...
THE DEVIL COMES, CESSILY... PLEASE...PLEASE DO NOT LET ME FIGHT ALONE.
OH, GOD, SOORAYA...
HE IS HERE.

YOU KNOW WHERE SHE IS! YOU WERE WITH HER!
ANSWER ME!
WE WEREN'T WITH HER! WE DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT! WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO YOU ARE!
MORE LIES. YOU KNOW WELL ENOUGH TO FEAR ME.
BOTH OF YOU, SO AFRAID. I CAN TASTE IT ON YOUR SOULS.
YOU, AFRAID OF THE DEVIL. AFRAID THAT YOU ARE NOT SO WORTHY OF YOUR GOD'S LOVE.
AND YOU... SO AFRAID OF BEING HURT. AHH, HURT *AGAIN*. THE PAIN IS SO TERRIBLE, ISN'T IT?
SOORAYA... *NOW!*

HAHAHA HAHA!
FWASH!
AAAAHHH!
CESSILY!!
NNN!!
NONONO NONO...
SHRACK!
AAIIIIEEE!
HNN!
I AM THE DEVIL.
AND YOUR TIME IN HELL IS JUST BEGINNING.

THE XAVIER INSTITUTE. EARTH.
"THE ENERGY FIELD IS UNLIKE ANYTHING WE'VE SEEN BEFORE, BUT AGAIN...WE'RE NOT DEALING WITH SCIENCE ANYMORE."
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUSLY SUGGESTING THIS IS MAGIC?
IF HE WEREN'T ON S.H.I.E.L.D.'S BLACKLIST RIGHT NOW, YOU'D BE ASKING A GUY NAMED DR. STRANGE THAT QUESTION, COLONEL. AND HE'D PROBABLY TURN YOU INTO A LLAMA FOR ASKING IT.
THE X-MEN AND THIS "BELASCO" GO WAY BACK, AND IT'S NOT A PRETTY HISTORY. OUR GOAL NOW IS TO FIND A WAY INTO LIMBO, AND PULL THE STUDENTS AND X-MEN OUT.
I'VE GOT A HIT, CROSS-REFERENCING O*N*E AND THE X-MEN'S FILES RELATED TO KEY-WORDS "BELASCO" AND "LIMBO."
A WOMAN WAS CHECKED INTO A GERMAN HOSPITAL TWO DAYS AGO, IDENTIFIED AS AMANDA SEFTON.
SHE'S IN A COMA.
AMANDA SEFTON. KURT WAGNER'S EX-GIRLFRIEND, SORCERESS, AND AS FAR AS THE X-MEN KNOW, CURRENT RULER OF LIMBO.
SHE CAN GET US INTO LIMBO. WE'RE GOING TO GET HER.
YOU TWO AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE. THE O*N*E WILL HANDLE THIS.
YOU MIGHT WANT TO RETHINK THAT.

BELASCO'S CASTLE.
LIMBO.
UUUHHNN...
JOSH... JOSH, YOU HAVE TO WAKE UP...
I THINK LAURA'S DEAD.
SO TIRED...I CAN'T...I CAN'T MOVE...
DAVID... WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
HE... HE TOOK DOWN THE PSYCHICS.
THEY'RE A THREAT TO HIM.
WE HAVE TO FREE THE CUCKOOS.
WHERE IS SHE?!
UHN!

YOUR TRANSIENT FORMS MAY BE MORE RESISTANT TO MY MAGICS, BUT IT WILL JUST MAKE THE PAIN LAST LONGER.
TELL ME WHERE SHE IS!
NO.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, AND I DON'T CARE. NOT ANYMORE.
BUT I'LL DIE A THOUSAND TIMES BEFORE I LET YOU HURT ANYONE ELSE.
AND I STAND BESIDE HER.
HSSSS...
IF TODAY IS THE DAY I DIE, THEN LET IT BE A DEATH THAT MAKES ALLAH PROUD.
SO BE IT.

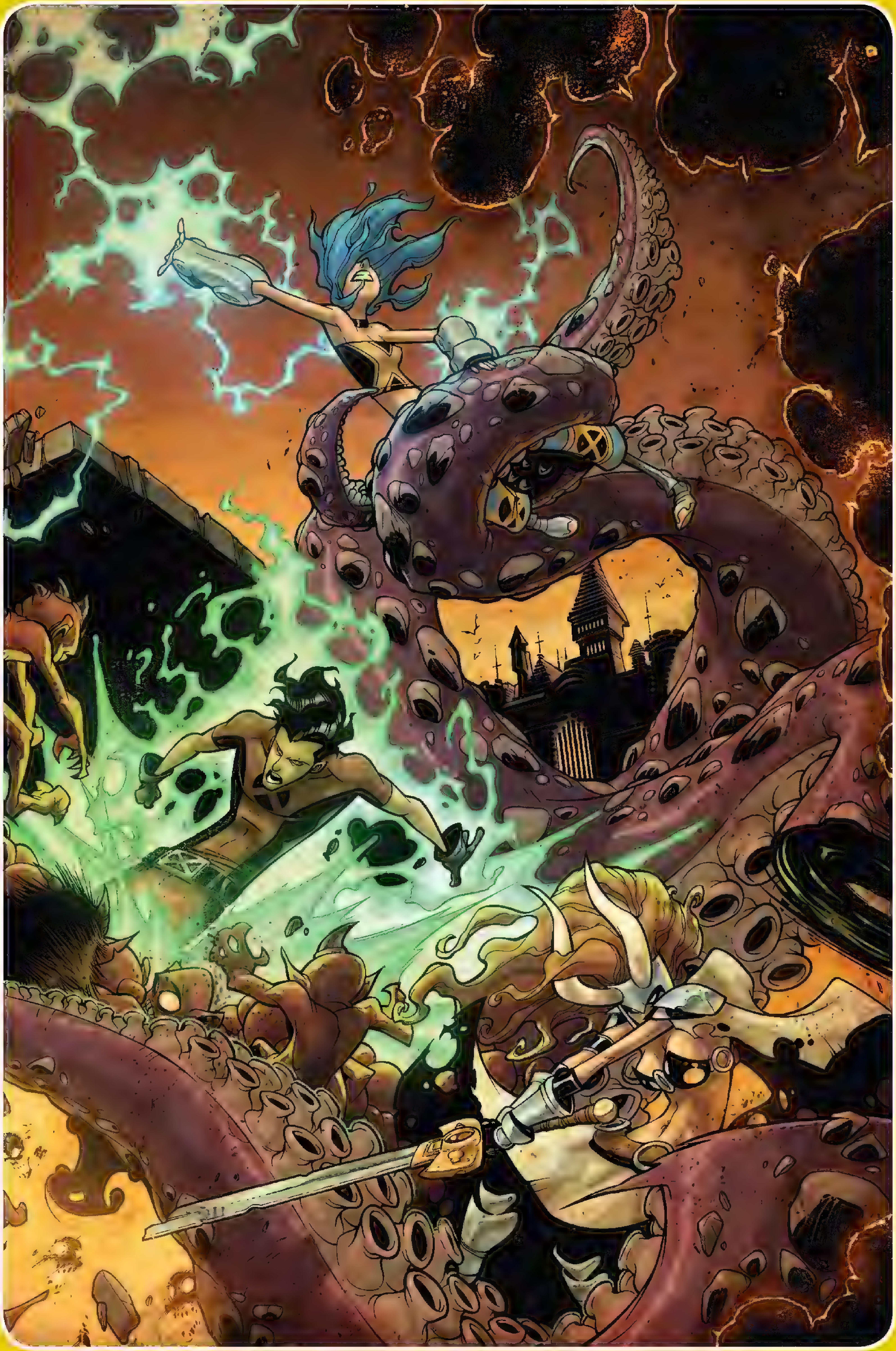
THE WASTELANDS. LIMBO.
I CAN FEEL HIM. BELASCO. HE'S HURTING YOUR FRIENDS RIGHT NOW.
...UHHHN...
VICTOR, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? SHE'S COMING...
...DOESN'T MAKE SENSE...I SHOULD BE DEAD. I SHOULD HAVE BLED TO DEATH...
IT DOESN'T HURT.
I KNOW WHAT HE'S THINKING, WHAT HE'S FEELING...
BUT HE'S STRONGER THAN ME. HE MADE SURE OF THAT.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND... WHAT DO YOU WANT?
THE ONLY THING THAT CAN KILL HIM...
...IS A SOULSWORD.
AND I'VE LOST MINE.

GET AWAY FROM HER!
FWZAM!
AAAHH!
THOOM!
ALANI!! NO!
IN ORDER TO FORM A SOULSWORD, ONE NEEDS A *SOUL*.
NOW TELL ME...DO YOU WANT TO SAVE YOUR FRIENDS?
WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR SOUL TO SAVE THEM?
YOU WANT...MY SOUL?
MEGAN, *NO!* DON'T LISTEN TO HER! WE'LL FIND ANOTHER WAY!

NIC...ON MY COUNT...
ONE... TWO...
THREE!
NO MORE SAVIORS, LITTLE PIXIE.
ZZX
SHOOOOOM!
YOU ARE ALONE.

I CAN FEEL THEM DYING.
I CAN HEAR THEIR CRIES.
PLEASE... STOP. I DON'T WANT ANY MORE OF MY FRIENDS TO DIE.
I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES.
TRY NOT TO SCREAM.

AAAAIIIIIIEEEEE!



NEW X-MEN 40

"THE QUEST FOR MAGIK" PART THREE OF FOUR

<WE'RE LOSING HER! CHARGE TO 350!>
WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
<STILL CHARGING!>
SHE'S FLATLINED... THEY'RE TRYING TO SHOCK HER HEART BACK...
MOVE!
SURGE?!
AAAAHH!
MEIN GOTT...
DAMMIT, ASHIDA, YOU COULD HAVE KILLED HER!
CAN SHE GET US THERE OR NOT?
AMANDA... IT'S ME, VAL COOPER. YOU'RE IN A HOSPITAL IN GERMANY...WITNESSES SAY YOU FELL FROM THE SKY.
≠AUHH!!≠ ≠KOFF!!≠ WHAT... ≠KOFF!≠ WHERE...
AMANDA SEFTON. SORCERESS.
YOU WERE IN A COMA. CAN YOU REMEMBER--
≠KOFF!!≠ I DON'T...JUST GIVE ME A...
BELASCO. OH GOD...HE'S...I CAN'T... THE X-MEN...HE'S COMING FOR THEIR CHILDREN.
NO KIDDING, LADY.
MISS SEFTON...THE XAVIER INSTITUTE WAS ATTACKED SIX HOURS AGO. WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THIS BELASCO IS BEHIND THE ATTACK.

HE'S GOT OUR FRIENDS, AND HE'S GOT THE X-MEN. WE NEED YOU TO TAKE US TO LIMBO SO WE CAN RESCUE THEM.
I...CAN'T... I CAN BARELY BREATHE...HAVE TO...NEED THE SOULSWORD...
THE WHAT?
ILLYANA RASPUTIN'S SOUL-SWORD. KURT HAS IT...WE HAVE TO FIND NIGHTCRAWLER.
YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.
AMANDA, KURT ISN'T...HE'S NOT ON EARTH RIGHT NOW. HE'S IN ANOTHER GALAXY.
THEY'RE DEAD, THEN. THE X-MEN...THE STUDENTS... THEY'RE ALL DEAD.
SHUT UP AND GET DRESSED.
YOU'RE TAKING US TO LIMBO.
NOW.

LIMBO.
I WAS SIX YEARS OLD.
AIIEEEEE!
BELASCO TOOK MY SOUL APART PIECE BY PIECE TO FORM THE BLOODSTONES.
HE TOOK MY INNOCENT SOUL AND TWISTED IT, TO USE IT AS A SACRIFICE TO THE ELDER GODS.
WHEN HE HAD ALL FIVE PIECES OF MY SOUL, HE WOULD HAVE THE POWER TO BRING THEM TO EARTH.
YOU AND I, LITTLE PIXIE... WE WILL USE YOUR INNOCENCE AGAINST BELASCO.
EXCUSE ME, SHE CANNOT BE TRUSTED. IT IS ALMOST TIME. YOU MUST SAVE HER, PLEASE.
MEGAN!
LET HER GO!!
INNOCENCE IS POWER.

AND POWER IS THE SOULSWORD.
YOU WERE A SQUAD LEADER, DO SOMETHING!! SHE'S HURTING MEGAN!
I CAN'T! I CAN'T MOVE!
NEZHNO, LOA...WAKE UP!!
BLINDFOLD, WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN? WHAT DO I DO?!
HOW?!
YOU WILL SAVE HER, YES PLEASE.
YOU HAVE STRENGTH WITHIN YOU.
PLEASE STOP... IT HURTS!
I KNOW. I REMEMBER.
CRRACK!
MEGAN! MEGAN!!

THE SOULSWORD IS YOUR LIFE, MEGAN.
IT IS YOUR SOUL FORGED INTO A WEAPON.
SHE LIES, YES. SHE WANTS THE BLOODSTONES. SHE WANTS THEIR POWER.
SHE IS TAKING IT ALL.
WITH THE SOULSWORD, YOUR INNOCENCE CAN DESTROY. IT CAN CUT MAGIC AND MAKE SPELLS BLEED.
IT CAN KILL BELASCO.
WITH YOUR SOUL, PIXIE...
...I CAN KILL BELASCO.

NO!!
UH!!
SSSSSSS

PLEASE... JUST STOP. DON'T DO THIS.
BECAUSE I'LL HURT YOU IF I HAVE TO.
...NNN...
YOU WILL SUFFER FOR--
...GET... GET AWAY...
WHAT--?!
RRRUMMMBBLLEE

YOU GET THE #@$% AWAY FROM MY FRIENDS!!

SANTO?!
YOU HEAR ME, DEVIL CHICK?! I DON'T CARE HOW HOT YOU ARE, I'M GONNA RIP OFF THOSE HORNS AND USE 'EM AS TOOTHPICKS!
AND THAT'S JUST FOR STARTERS!
SHRACK!
MEGAN! MEGAN!!
MEGAN, PLEASE TELL ME YOU'RE OKAY!
I'M... I'M...
OH, GROSS! VICTOR, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR ARM?
MEGAN! WHAT ABOUT YOUR...
MY SOUL.

YOUR STUPID LIGHTSHOW ISN'T DOING SQUAT, DAZZLER.
UHH!
WHAM
I SAW YOU. I SAW YOU HURT THEM...HURT *HER*. ALL I COULD DO WAS WATCH. BUT NOW...
...NOW, YOU'RE DEAD.
RRRAAAA--
AH?
SANTO, STOP!
BORKOWSKI? DUDE...WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO YOUR ARM? THAT'S GROSS.
IT...I DON'T KNOW, IT GREW BACK THAT WAY. AND SHUT UP! WE NEED HER TO TAKE US TO FIND THE OTHERS!
THE ROCK PERSON'S NEW FORM MAY BE RESISTANT TO MY MAGIC NOW, BUT I WILL KILL--
CRACK!
UHN!
YOU'LL SHUT THE HELL UP, GOAT-LEGS, AND TAKE US WHEREVER WE SAY!
I...I CAN'T. HE SEALED HIS CASTLE FROM ME...MY POWERS, MY MAGIC...I CAN'T.
WHO... WHO ARE YOU? WHERE'S KITTY? WHERE ARE DANI AND SAM?
PLEASE... WHERE IS MY BROTHER?
...
COME AGAIN?

RRRRRAAAA!!
ENOUGH!!
UH!!
I SENSED HER. I SAW HER, ALIVE, ON EARTH.
AND I CAN SMELL HER ON YOU! YOU WERE WITH HER, AND I WILL NOT HEAR YOUR LIES!
WHAT DO-- =HK!=--EVEN WANT WITH HER?
HER SOUL BELONGS TO ME, AND YOU WILL TELL ME WHERE TO FIND HER!
SAY IT!
NO, I... YES, I WAS WITH HER...WITH... ILLYANA. SHE'S ALIVE.
WE'RE... WE'RE HIDING HER.
WHERE?
WHERE IS--
=HK=

I'M SORRY.
AAAARARRGHH!!
JOSH... JOSH, YOU DID IT...
ARE YOU GUYS OKAY? DO YOU NEED ME TO--
NO... THIS IS NOT RIGHT.
THUD!
YOU CANNOT KILL THE DEVIL.
SHOOOM!

GERMANY
COOPER TOLD ME TO WATCH OUT FOR YOU, CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?
SHE THINKS YOU'VE LOST IT.
I TOLD HER YOU'RE FINE, THAT YOUR HEAD'S IN THIS.
I'M NOT LYING, AM I?
YOU KNOW HOW TRANCE IS... HE COULD BE FINE, NORI.
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED FOR SURE. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE.
ARE YOU GOING TO BE OKAY?
ASK ME AGAIN ONCE I'VE TURNED BELASCO INTO A SMOKING BLACK PILE OF ASH.

I REMEMBER. I REMEMBER MY LIFE WITH PIOTR, THEN COMING TO THE SCHOOL. BELASCO, THE X-MEN, THE NEW MUTANTS...I REMEMBER THE DARK TIMES...THE INFERNO.
THEN NOTHING.
"WHEN BELASCO TOOK BACK LIMBO, HE USED HIS MAGICS TO SUMMON ME...PULLING TO HIM EVERY BIT OF MY ESSENCE, EVERY MEMORY THAT HE COULD FIND.
"I APPEARED BEFORE HIM..."
...BUT MY SOUL WAS ***MISSING.*** INSTEAD OF ILLYANA, BELASCO GOT DARKCHILD INSTEAD.
THAT'S MESSED UP. IF YOU WENT TO CHURCH, WOULD YOU CATCH ON FIRE?
BELASCO WANTED YOU... BUT NOT YOU?
HE WANTS MY SOUL, NOT ME. HE WANTS TO HAVE EVERYTHING THAT I WAS.
AND I'M GOING TO KILL HIM BEFORE HE GETS IT.

YEAAAAH, OKAY. WHATEVER YOU SAY, EVIL ILLYANA.
LOOK, RIGHT NOW WE HAVE TO GET TO OUR FRIENDS AND GET THEM OUT OF THERE.
HOW DO WE GET TO BELASCO'S CASTLE?
I TOLD YOU... I CAN'T. BUT THE GIRL... PIXIE CAN.
THE CREATION OF THE BLOODSTONE HAS MADE A HOLE IN HER SOUL, WHICH WAS FILLED WITH BLACK MAGIC.
AND SHE HAS A SOULSWORD NOW...OF SORTS.
A HOLE IN MY SOUL...
OHMIGOD! I'M EVIL NOW! YOU TURNED ME EVIL! *YOU BI--*
WHOA! MEGAN!
LOOK, UM, ILLYANA...HOW CAN PIXIE GET US THERE?
I CAN TEACH HER A SPELL...
...A TELEPORTATION SPELL.

"I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOU, CHILDREN.
"I DON'T CARE IF YOU LIVE OR DIE."
JOSH... CAN YOU...
...DON'T... DON'T HAVE ANYTHING LEFT...
BUT I WILL KILL EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU UNTIL YOU TELL ME WHERE ILLYANA RASPUTIN IS.
WHAT... WHAT IS HE...
THIS IS WHAT AWAITS YOU.

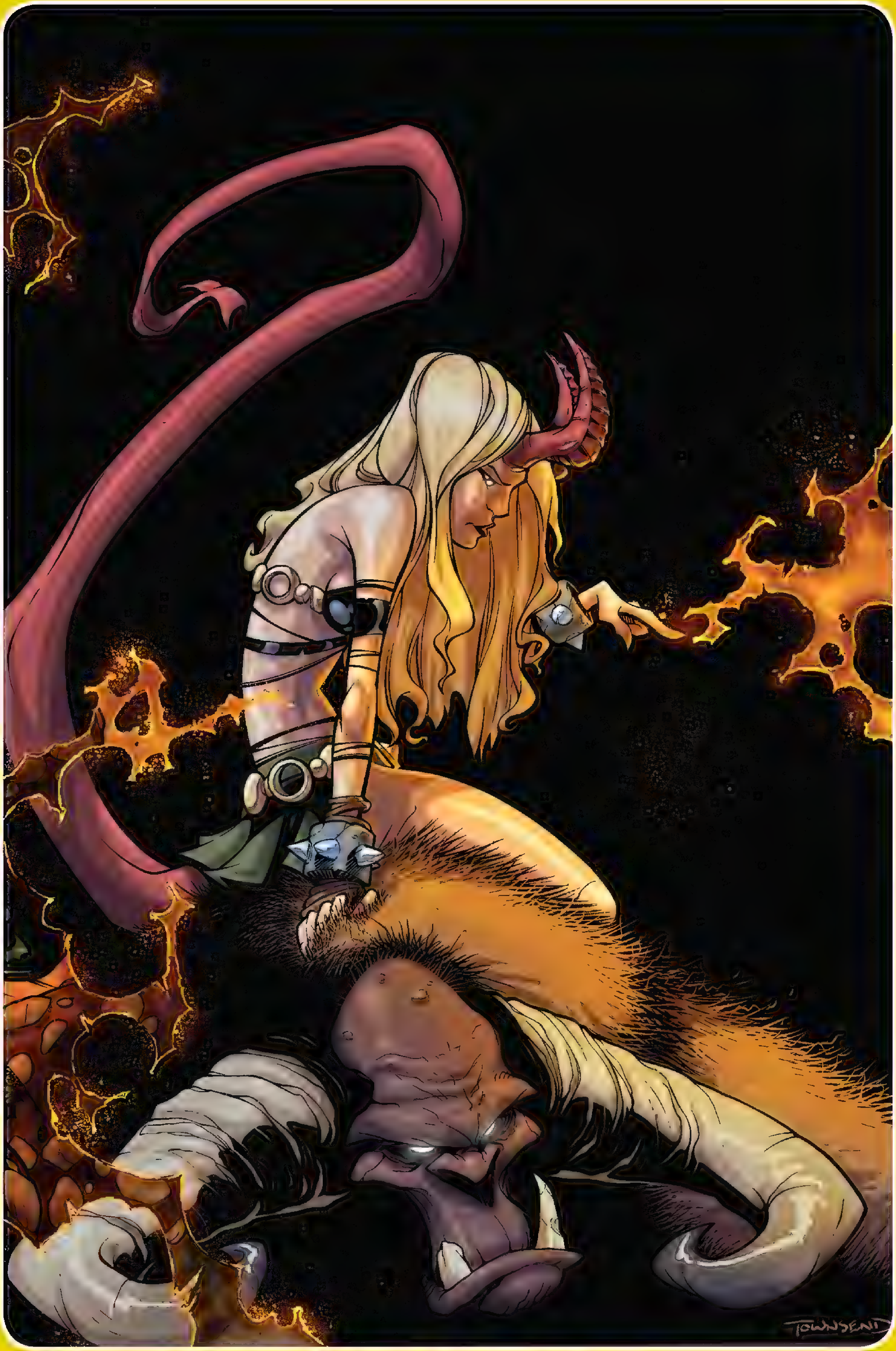
COME BACK TO ME, ABOMINATION.
SHMMM!
HUAAAAAHH!
THIS CAN LAST AS LONG OR AS SHORT AS YOU WISH. TIME HAS NO MEANING HERE.
BUT PAIN AND SUFFERING DO.
LAURA...

AAA--⸗
SSSHLOKK!
LAURA!
I WILL KILL EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU, THEN BRING YOU BACK TO LIFE AND KILL YOU AGAIN UNTIL YOU TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO KNOW.
AND IF YOU DON'T...
I WILL PULL ALL OF EARTH INTO LIMBO TO FIND HER.

FWASH!
--LOST ALL CONTACT WITH O*N*E COMMAND, MISS SEFTON. IS THIS--
WE'VE CROSSED OVER INTO LIMBO. YOUR SENTINEL ONLY WORKS HERE BECAUSE OF MY MAGICS.
AND LEX? THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE WE'RE GOING TO DIE HERE. MY NAME'S AMANDA.
SURGE, HELLION... DO YOU COPY?
YEAH. WE'RE HERE.
I CAN'T SEE FOR CRAP. THIS IS LIMBO?
WEIRD.

MY SPELL SHOULD HAVE...IT SHOULD SYNC UP TIME...THEY'VE ONLY BEEN HERE FOR A FEW HOURS NOW, NOT YEARS.
YEARS?! ARE YOU SERIOUS?
AMANDA? ARE YOU OKAY?
...nnnn...
IS SHE OKAY? ASK HER WHERE THIS CASTLE IS.
DAMMIT! SHE PASSED OUT! THE STRAIN MAY HAVE BEEN TOO MUCH.
KELLER, DO YOU SEE ANYTHING?
NO. MAGIC IS BULL--
WAIT. DID YOU HEAR THAT?
NORI...I'M PICKING SOMETHING UP.
OH, GOD. ARE YOU SEEING THIS?
YEAH...

...WE SEE IT.



NEW X-MEN 41

“THE QUEST FOR MAGIK” conclusion

THE WASTELANDS. LIMBO.
YOU HAVE *GOT* TO BE KIDDING ME.
THIS IS YOUR BIG PLAN? EVIL ILLYANA TURNS PIXIE INTO DARK PIXIE, TEACHES HER A MAGIC FREAKING SPELL, AND THEN WE GO FIGHT THE DEVIL.
YOU SHOULD REPLACE CYCLOPS. RIGHT NOW.
SHUT. UP.
ANOLE SAVED HER, EXCUSE ME. SHE WILL NOT FALL. SO, YES, PLEASE...
...SHUT UP.
...SIHAL NOVARUM CHUN--
NO.
YOU ARE NOT TRYING HARD ENOUGH!
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO THIS WITHOUT SPEAKING!
THIS ISN'T EVEN ENGLISH! AND THERE'S A *LOT* OF WORDS!!
AND YOU'RE *MEAN!*
AGAIN!
...SIHAL NOVARUM CHINOTH...

OUTSIDE BELASCO'S CASTLE.
WATCH IT!!
WHAT THE HELL ARE THESE THINGS?!
SURGE, DO YOU COPY?!
I'LL HOLD THEM OFF, YOU TWO GO! GET TO THE CASTLE!
WHAT?! WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE YOU!
I DIDN'T SAY, GO SLOW.
SEFTON'S OUR ONLY WAY OUT OF HERE...
HELLION!
I'VE GOT THIS. GO!!
SHOOOM!

INSIDE BELASCO'S COURTYARD.
YOU DARE LIE TO ME?! YOU DARE LAY YOUR HANDS ON ME?!
=UNF!!=
NNN... E...ELIX...
I WILL FIND MY APPRENTICE, AND YOU CHILDREN WILL NOT DENY ME!!
JUST...JUST STOP...WE DON'T KNOW WHERE SHE IS...PLEASE...
...LEAVE HER ALONE...
THE DEVOUT LITTLE GIRL.
DON'T YOU KNOW THAT LYING IS A SIN? AND SINS MUST BE PUNISHED.
SHRACK!
VMMM!
NO! NO!!!! I WILL KILL EACH AND EVERY--
BELASCO.

SHUT UP AND DIE.
KRACKK!
AAAARRRRGHHH!!
YOU KILLED DAVID!! YOU'RE GOING TO DIE, DO YOU HEAR ME?!
DIE!
I...THINK... NOT...
TOO BAD.
SURGE, STOP! IT'S OVER!
DON'T GET IN MY WAY. HE KILLED DAVID.
YOU MEAN THAT DAVID OVER THERE?
WHAT?
DAVID?
NORI!! WATCH OUT!!

CHOOOOOOM!
≠NNN!≠
≠HHK!≠
YOU WERE WITH HER! YOU WERE CLOSE TO HER. I CAN SMELL IT!
WHERE IS MAGIK?!
≠KK... HK...≠
WHERE IS ILLYANA RASPUTIN?!
WHO?!

FWSSSH!
WHAT?
ALL RIGHT... WHICH ONE OF YOU CHUMPS IS 'BELASCO'?
SANTO?!
SANTO!!
YOU!!
HOW DARE YOU COME HERE?

UM, HE MEANS YOU, RIGHT?
NOW IT ENDS, DEMON!
DARKCHILD, WAIT!
RRRRAAAA!
HEY! DARKCHICK! ANOLE SAID WAIT!
IT'S OKAY IF I POUND HIM, THOUGH, RIGHT?
JUST HIT HIM, ROCKSLIDE!
ENOUGH. S'YM...
KILL THEM ALL.
FINALLY.

DARK-CHILD!! ARE YOU OKAY?
PIXIE!! WATCH OUT! USE YOUR DAGGER!
PIXIE... I NEED MORE. I NEED MORE POWER...
I NEED THE REST OF--
UHN!
FWASSSH!
AHHH!!
YOU ARE NOT FIT TO BE IN MY PRESENCE! HOW DARE YOU!
I SHOWED YOU MERCY, I LET YOU LIVE, AND THIS IS HOW YOU REPAY ME?
NOW I CORRECT MY MISTAKE. DIE.
HSSSS!!
UFF!!

SHE WAS NOT YOUR ONLY MISTAKE.
ABOMINATION... HOW MANY TIMES MUST I KILL YOU? WHEN WILL YOU LEARN?
I'VE LEARNED ENOUGH.
TAKE HIM.
YOUR HELMETS... WE DIDN'T LIKE THEM.

FWASH
AAARRGHH!!
HNNN!! NO!! GET OUT OF MY MIND!
WHAT DO YOU WANT, DEVIL MAN?
YOU KIDNAP THE INNOCENT... WE CAN SEE THEM. BEATRICE. SHANNA. ILLYANA.
BUT ILLYANA WAS SPECIAL. YOU CLAIMED HER AS A SACRIFICE, BUT YOU CAME TO FEEL FOR HER. YOU WANTED HER TO BE YOURS, BODY AND SOUL.
YOU LOST HER, JUST LIKE THE OTHERS.
BUT WITH HER, THE LOSS CUT DEEPER.
THE THOUGHT THAT SHE HAD RETURNED...IT WAS TOO MUCH. YOU DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE THAT WHAT YOU SAW WASN'T REAL.
YOU COULDN'T FIND HER. SO YOU TRIED TO RECREATE HER.
HER BODY...HER MIND...BUT IT WASN'T ENOUGH. YOU WANTED MORE.
YOU'RE NOT LOOKING FOR HER FOR REVENGE, OR POWER...
YOU DID ALL THIS...
...BECAUSE YOU LOVED HER?
CELESTE... PHOEBE...
HE'S... TOO...
...STRONG!!

RRRAAAA!!!
CHOOOM!
HELLION! X! SOMEONE, TAKE HIM DOWN!!
IF YOU LYING WORMS WILL NOT TELL ME WHERE MAGIK IS, THEN I WILL BRING EARTH TO LIMBO AND *BURN IT AWAY* UNTIL I FIND HER!!

SKREEE!!
SHRACK!
AMANDA! AMANDA, YOU HAVE TO WAKE UP!
SOME-THING'S HAPPENING OUTSIDE!! I SEE...I SEE NEW YORK?
I... I CAN FEEL IT...
BELASCO. BELASCO IS BRINGING EARTH TO LIMBO.
EARTH. THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM.
SPIDER-MAN AND DR. STRANGE.
UM, DOC? IF I TOLD YOU THE CITY HAD GONE ALL MISTY, AND DEMONS WERE POPPING OUT OF MID-AIR...THAT'S BAD, RIGHT?
OR IS THIS JUST SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS ON YOUR STREET?
THIS... IS BAD. OUR DIMENSION IS MERGING WITH ANOTHER.
AND?
AND I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN STOP IT IN TIME.

KEEP ON HIM!! DON'T LET UP!
NOW IS THE TIME, PIXIE.
I CAN'T...I CAN'T DO THIS, PLEASE, I'M SCARED...WHY ME?
BECAUSE OF ALL THE CHILDREN I FELT COME INTO LIMBO, YOUR SOUL WAS MOST PURE. IN THIS PLACE, YOU HAVE THE MOST POWER, MORE THAN ANY OTHER X-MAN.
IF YOU CAN'T DO THIS, THEN EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS WILL DIE.
=UHN!!=
COME ON, NORI...FIND A WAY...
CHOOOM!

IT WILL BRING ME MUCH JOY TO KILL THE CHILDREN OF THE X-MEN.
NO!

HSSS!!!!
HH...HUK... NNOO...
...YOU... I GAVE YOU... LIFE...MY CHILD...
...COME BACK TO ME...
YOU DID... YOU GAVE ME A LIFE WITH NO SOUL. A LIFE OF HELLISH TORTURE.
I'VE FOUND THE POWER TO THANK YOU FOR THAT.
LOOK, FATHER. I'VE MADE A BLOODSTONE, JUST LIKE YOU TAUGHT ME.
I WILL FIND HER.
NO. YOU WON'T.

DARK-CHILD? ARE YOU OKAY?
CAN WE GO HOME NOW?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT--
NO... NOT UNTIL I FINISH WHAT I STARTED.
OH, NO.
UM, DARKCHILD? WHY ARE ALL THE DEMONS BOWING TO YOU?
LIMBO IS MINE. AND YOU, LITTLE PIXIE...
...YOUR SOUL IS MINE, TOO. ONE BLOODSTONE IS POWER, BUT FIVE? FIVE WILL MAKE ME A *GOD*.
WHAT?!?!
DON'T DO THIS...ILLYANA, PLEASE...YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS.
DO NOT CALL ME THAT NAME. MY NAME IS--
SNOWFLAKE?

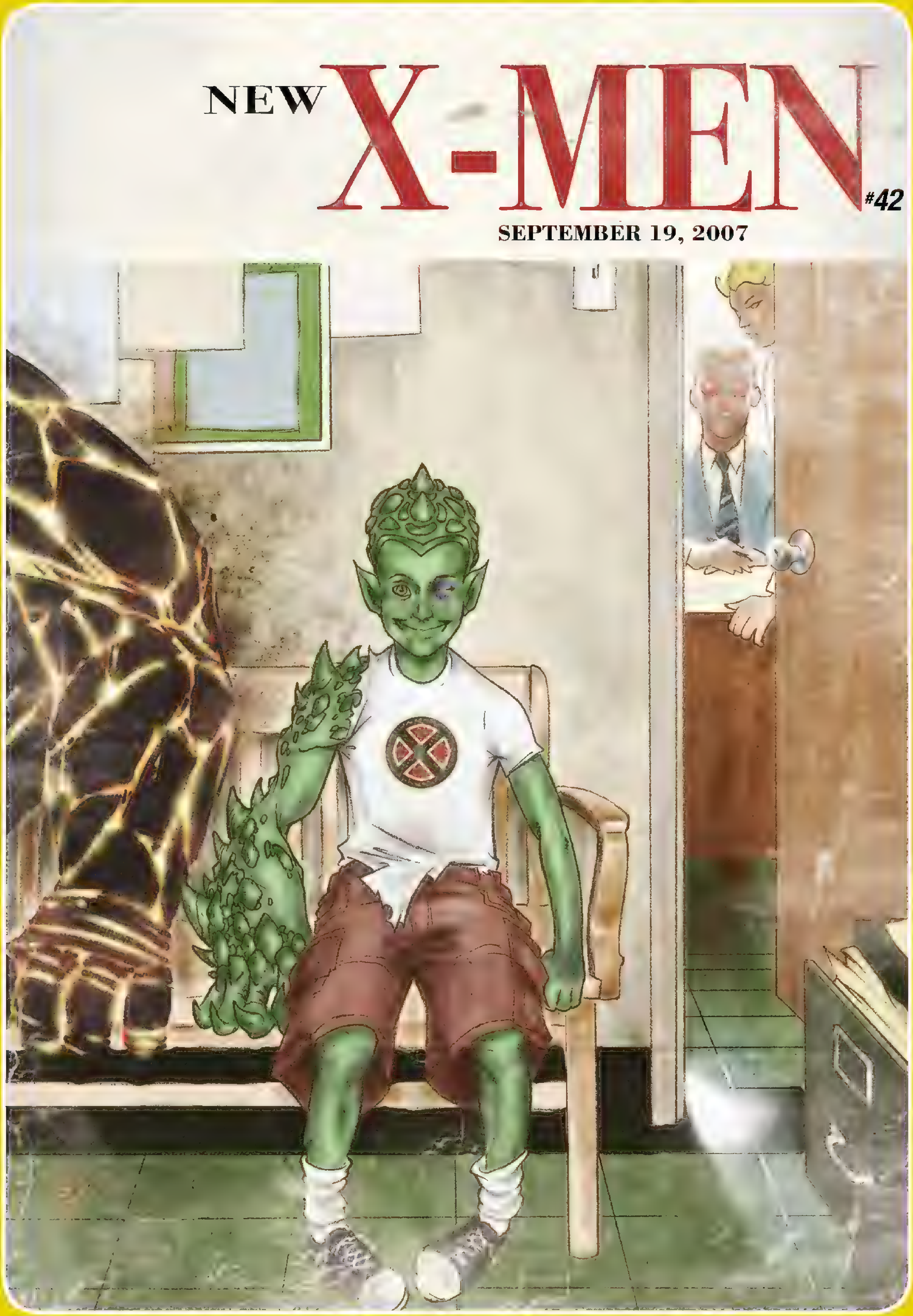
SNOWFLAKE, CAN THAT BE YOU?
PIOTR...
HAVE YOU RETURNED TO ME?
PETER...
BE CAREFUL...
PLEASE, TELL ME THE TRUTH...
ILLYANA, IS THIS YOU?
NO!
DO NOT LOOK AT ME!

ALL OF YOU, JUST GO AWAY!
VMMM!
WHOA.
AW, HELL. IT'S HER. IT'S--
BLAM!
RRRAAAA!
BLAM!

PETER!!
KATYA!!
HEY! HEY!! WHAT ABOUT MY SOUL! WHAT ABOUT MY--
DON'T DO THIS! LET ME HELP YOU!
LET ME--
GOOD-BYE, BROTHER.

THE XAVIER INSTITUTE. NIGHT.
--LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED. THE ENTIRE BUILDING IS FINE.
TRANCE WOKE UP ONCE HER BODY GOT BACK TO EARTH. I GUESS COLOSSUS WANTED TO GO BACK FOR DARKCHILD, BUT AMANDA SEFTON SAID LIMBO HAD BEEN SEALED OFF.
ROCKSLIDE'S STILL MADE OF LIMBO-ROCK.
AND MY NEW ARM ITCHES.
MY SOUL ITCHES.
...TOUCHE.
HEY, NERDS.
I'M TOO TIRED TO YELL AT YOU, SANTO.
GOOD, THEN JUST LISTEN. I TALKED TO SURGE AND CYCLOPS.
I TOLD THEM THAT IF THERE WASN'T ROOM ON THE TEAM FOR YOU TWO, I'D QUIT TO MAKE ROOM.
YOU DESERVE IT.
...
NERDS.

LIMBO.
WELL, BOSS...
HHSSSS...
...WHAT NOW?
NOW, S'YM?
NOW I GET MY SOUL BACK.


NEW X-MEN
#42
SEPTEMBER 19, 2007

NEW X-MEN 42

"CHILDREN OF X-MEN" PART 1 OF 2

THE XAVIER INSTITUTE. SEVERAL WEEKS AGO.
"GOD IS WITH YOU, MATTHEW. ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT."
THERE'S NO FUTURE FOR YOU, DEMON-SPAWN!
MATTHEW RISMAN. ASSASSIN.
PURIFIER.
BUDDA! BUDDA! BUDDA! BUDDA! BUDDA!
MOVE!!
AAIEEEEE!
THERE'S NO FUTURE--
TURAAB!
AAAARGHH!!
WWHHOOOSSSH!

UH!
NNN...
DAVID!!
ARE YOU OKAY? OH, GOD...YOU'VE BEEN SHOT!
WHERE IS STRYKER, DAVID?
HE'S AT CEREBRA... ONYXX, HE'S BEEN HURT, YOU HAVE TO HURRY!
KK...QA... DIR...
PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
"FATHER MATTHEW?"

WASHINGTON, D.C.
NOW.
SIR?
HM?? WHAT IS IT?
THE OTTAWA CHURCH IS ONLINE. ARE YOU WELL, SIR?
I'M FINE.
BROTHER PAUL, REPORT.
WE'VE GOT ITS TRAIL, SIR.
PREDATOR X IS ALIVE...
"...AND IT'S HUNTING."

THE XAVIER INSTITUTE.
...DEFEATED NIMROD, SAVED ONE OF THEIR OWN FROM THE FACILITY, AND NOW, SAVED US FROM BELASCO.
ALL SINCE M-DAY.
HELL, WE SHOULD JUST RETIRE NOW. MAYBE SHOOT THE KIDS INTO SPACE, LET *THEM* DEAL WITH VULCAN.
LOGAN, YOUR SENSITIVITY IS STAGGERING.
THERE ARE TWENTY-FIVE STUDENTS AT THE INSTITUTE.
THAT'S NOW ABOUT ONE-EIGHTH THE MUTANT POPULATION IN THE WORLD, RIGHT HERE.
AND WE'VE FAILED THEM IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE.
WE HAVEN'T PROTECTED THEM, WE DON'T EVEN *KNOW* THEM. THAT ENDS NOW, TODAY. THEIR PROTECTION IS OUR IMPERATIVE.
BECAUSE IF EVERYTHING HANK IS SAYING IS TRUE...
...THEY COULD WELL BE THE LAST GENERATION OF X-MEN.
I DIDN'T KNOW WE HAD A LAVA KID.
THAT'S ROCKSLIDE. I'M STILL FIGURING IT OUT.

YOUR SHOULDER IS DISLOCATED. YOU MUST BE IN QUITE A BIT OF PAIN.
I...DID NOT WISH TO BE A BOTHER.
YOU WENT HEAD-TO-HEAD WITH BELASCO, SOORAYA. YOU MORE THAN EARNED THE RIGHT TO BOTHER US.
SOORAYA AND I ARE TEAMMATES NOW, DOCTOR McCOY!!
WE'RE PROBABLY GOING TO BE BEST FRIENDS.
ARE YOU INJURED, MEGAN?
I LOST A PIECE OF MY SOUL, BUT THAT SORCERESS AMANDA SEFTON AND SOME GUY NAMED DOCTOR STRANGE CHECKED ME OUT, AND DOCTOR STRANGE SAID THAT I HAD PLENTY OF SOUL TO SPARE.
CHOK!
AAAHH!!
THERE WE GO.
WOW, THAT LOOKED PAINFUL! ARE YOU OKAY? DID YOU KNOW I CAN DO MAGIC NOW? I'VE GOT MY SOUL DAGGER, AND I LEARNED A SPELL ALREADY... I CAN TELEPORT!
...GOOD?
AND DOCTOR STRANGE SAID THAT HE'D TEACH ME MORE, BUT I HAVE TO BE EIGHTEEN. AND THAT I HAVE TO TAKE A VOW OF SILENCE.
WE'RE HOPING HE'LL TAKE YOU EARLY, THOUGH. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK, SOORAYA.
SO WHY DO YOU WEAR THAT BURQA? YOU'RE SO PRETTY! EVERYONE'S SEEN YOU WITHOUT IT NOW, AND IT'S GOT TO BE REALLY, REALLY HOT.
IT IS NOT A BURQA. IT IS AN ABAYA WITH A NIQAB VEIL.

SHOW RESPECT FOR SOORAYA BY LEARNING ABOUT HER.
I...THANK YOU, NEHZNO. ARE YOU HURT, TOO?
NEHZNO! YOU TOTALLY SAVED ME IN LIMBO! WHY DON'T YOU EVER USE YOUR POWERS? YOU'RE LIKE THE HULK!
AND WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU DOWN THERE? IT'S LIKE YOU HAD A SPASM!
IT WAS A SEIZURE, MEGAN. EVERY TIME I USE MY "POWERS," AS YOU CALL THEM, MY STRENGTH INCREASES. SOON, MY BODY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONTAIN ITS OWN POWER.
ONLY THE VIBRANIUM TATTOOS ARE KEEPING THE POWER IN CHECK. BUT IT WILL NOT LAST.
AND THEN I WILL DIE.
OH.
HEY, YOU GUYS...QUICK QUESTION.
HOW OLD ARE YOU?

FOR THE LAST TIME, NO! YOU CANNOT CUT MY OTHER ARM OFF!
BEAST SAID IT'D GROW BACK, THAT IT'S PART OF YOUR POWER. WE SHOULD DO YOUR LEGS, TOO! YOU'LL TURN INTO SOME KIND OF AWESOME DRAGON GUY! SERIOUSLY, YOU HAVE TO!
X ALREADY AGREED TO DO IT, SHE SAID IT WOULDN'T EVEN HURT! AM I RIGHT?
I WOULD MAKE THE CUT AT THE GLENOHUMERAL JOINT.
IT WOULD BE OVER QUICKLY.
SNIKT
OKAY, BOTH OF YOU JUST BACK OFF! I LIKED MY ARM THE WAY IT WAS, AND I'M KEEPING THE ONE I'VE GOT LEFT!
OH, COME ON! YOU BIG SISSY!
WHAT DID YOU CALL ME?
HEY, GUYS. QUICK QUESTION...

NOK! NOK! NOK!
JOSH? ARE YOU IN THERE?
WHAT ARE...WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
THINKING.
IN THE DARK. UH, OKAY. HEY, I KNOW I SHOULD KNOW THIS, BUT...
...HOW OLD ARE YOU?
I CAN FEEL MY CELLS AGING. THEN, CELL DEATH. I KNOW EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT AGING.
THE QUESTION IS...CAN I STOP IT?
OOOOOOKAY, JOSH. I'LL ASK DAVID.
THANKS, AND UH, YOU KNOW, GOOD THINKING.

JULIAN? I THINK JOSH HAS FLIPPED OUT AGAIN.
ARE YOU IN THERE?
BOOOOM!
JULIAN?!
WHAT HAPPENED?!
FREAKING McCOY AND HIS FREAKING PAPER CLIP. I CAN'T CONTROL MY POWERS, CESS. ANYTHING SMALLER THAN A REFRIGERATOR, AND I CAN'T DEAL WITH IT.
AND WITH MARVEL GIRL STAYING IN SPACE, I'M LIKE THE LAST TELEKINETIC ON THE PLANET. UNLESS I WANT TO JOIN THE INITIATIVE AND TRAIN WITH SOME IDIOT CALLING HIMSELF "JUSTICE."
COME ON, YOU'LL GET IT...IT'S *YOU*, RIGHT? UM, NOT TO BLOW YOU OFF OR ANYTHING, BUT DO YOU KNOW HOW OLD THE CUCKOOS ARE?
OLD ENOUGH.
PERV. I'M SERIOUS.
THEY'RE TWO, I THINK. ARTIFICIALLY AGED TO FIFTEEN. LONG STORY.
WHY?
MATT LANDRU.

GOING TO THE LANDRU FUNERAL WITH LAURA MADE ME REALIZE... WITH NO NEW MUTANTS EMERGING, BEING BORN, WHATEVER...
...SOME MUTANT SOMEWHERE IS THE YOUNGEST MUTANT ON THE PLANET.
AND STATISTICALLY SPEAKING...IT'S PROBABLY ONE OF US.
WHAT ABOUT THAT ONE CHICK, THE PRIDE'S KID IN LOS ANGELES... THE RUNAWAY? SHE'S FIVE OR SOMETHING.
SHE'S NOT REGISTERING ON CEREBRA. ANGEL SALVADORE'S CHILD, TITO, IS TECHNICALLY THE YOUNGEST--
GROSS, DON'T REMIND ME. HE DOESN'T COUNT.
WHAT ABOUT FRANKLIN RICHARDS? YOU KNOW, THE FANTASTIC FOUR KID? DID HE KEEP HIS POWERS?
DOESN'T COUNT. NO ONE'S GOING TO SNIPE MISTER FANTASTIC'S KID. HE'S PROBABLY GOT HIS OWN TV SHOW.
MISS FROST IS OPENING THE DOOR.
WONDERFUL.
I'LL OVERLOOK THE FACT THAT YOU'RE EVEN IN HERE FOR NOW.
CESSILY, JULIAN... I NEED TO SEE YOU IN MY OFFICE. THE SENIOR STAFF IS CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS WITH THE STUDENTS.

ARE YOU SURE HE CAN TELL TIME?
NOT ENTIRELY.
CRASH!
OWW!! QUIT HITTING ME!
AH, HERE HE IS NOW.
I SWEAR, I DIDN'T KNOW! DON'T BE SO SENSITIVE!
SHUT!! UP!!

FIVE MINUTES LATER...
WAIT, YOU *WANT* ME TO BLOW UP? AGAIN?
MY SUSPICION IS THAT WHEN NIMROD SHATTERED YOU, HE ATOMIZED MOST OF YOUR ORIGINAL BODY. YOU RE-FORMED, BUT FROM ACTUAL ROCK.
AND?
AND I BELIEVE YOU ARE NOW TECHNICALLY A PSYCHIC ENTITY, ABLE TO FORM AND CONTROL A STONE "GOLEM," IF YOU WILL.
AND?
AND YOUR FORMER ABILITY TO "FIRE" OFF YOUR LIMBS DOESN'T WORK WITH YOUR NEW FORM... IT'S MORE DESTRUCTIVE, A LITERAL ROCK SLIDE. SO I WANT YOU TO DO IT AGAIN, AND SEE IF YOU COME BACK.
WAIT, *WHAT?* NO WAY!! WHAT IF I DON'T COME BACK?
YOU'VE ALREADY DONE IT TWICE.
GET OUT OF HERE, I'M NEVER USING MY POWERS AGAIN!
SISSY.
OKAY, THAT'S IT, I'M TAKING YOU DOWN!!

BOOOM!
THANK YOU, VICTOR.
NO PROBLEM.
THIS IS WHAT YOU BROUGHT ME FOR?
SANTO? IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, CONCENTRATE! TRY TO FEEL THE EARTH AROUND YOU, AND PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER.
RRRMMMMBBBBLLL
...GONNA POUND YOU INTO THE... HEY! I DID IT!
IT WAS JUST LIKE IN LIMBO...I COULD HEAR YOU, I COULD SEE...LIKE I WAS JUST FLOATING THERE...
YES, WELL DONE, SANTO. NOW, I'D LIKE TO SEE HOW YOU DO RE-FORMING WHEN SOMEONE ELSE SHATTERS YOU...
WHAT?!
OOO! OOO! ME!

I...I MIGHT HAVE SEEN IT WRONG. I SAW HIM FALL...IT WAS REALLY CHAOTIC. I THOUGHT HE WAS HURT, BUT... THE OTHERS PROBABLY KNOW BETTER.
HE...BROKE A RIB? BUT ELIXIR HEALED HIM.
AH, YOU KNOW, I THINK HE BROKE HIS WRIST WHEN HE FELL, BUT IT WAS NO BIG DEAL.
...
NOTHING HAPPENED. JUST A FEW SCRATCHES.
...AND THEN BELASCO PLUNGED HIS FINGERS INTO DAVID'S CHEST, PIERCING THE SKIN AND SEPARATING THE MUSCLES BENEATH. THE STERNUM AND SEVERAL RIBS WERE DEFINITELY SHATTERED.
HE THEN PULLED DAVID'S HEART OUT, SHREDDING THE ENTIRE CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM. BUT BECAUSE ELIXIR GOT TO HIM SO QUICKLY, HE WAS SAVED FROM ANY BRAIN DAMAGE.
THANK YOU, LAURA.

NORI! SURGE! WAIT UP! THIS IS IMPORTANT!
WHAT?!
NOW THAT WE'RE TEAMMATES, I HAVE TO TELL YOU... I THINK YOU AND DAVID MAKE A REALLY CUTE COUPLE.
SURGE.
WE NEED TO TALK.
WHAT ABOUT?
STUDENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES.
I'M BUSY.
OH!! I'LL MEET WITH YOU, CYCLOPS!
NOT SO FAST, DARLIN'.
YOU'RE COMING WITH ME.
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
SNIKT!
DANGER ROOM.
GULP!

SO. HOW ARE YOU? HOW IS THE TEAM?
IS THIS HOW IT IS? FINE. I'VE GOT A QUESTION. WHERE'S WITHER?
YOU REMEMBER, KEVIN FORD? ONE OF YOUR STUDENTS. HE RAN AWAY. YOU COULDN'T BE BOTHERED TO FIND HIM, AND NOW YOU'VE LOST HIM?
OR IS HE DEAD, AND YOU'RE JUST NOT TELLING US?
DUST TOLD US, YOU KNOW. ABOUT YOUR BIZARRE "TRUST" SPEECH. YOU'VE LOST IT, HAVEN'T YOU?
YOU'VE BLOWN US OFF SINCE THE PURIFIER ATTACK, AND NOW THIS? PUTTING A LITTLE DISTANCE BETWEEN US, JUST IN CASE WE DON'T MAKE IT?
CYCLOPS IS MAKING YOU DO THIS, ISN'T HE?
WE ALL THINK IT'S PRETTY SAD.
SLAM!
...DISMISSED.

NOK! NOK! NOK!
ELIXIR? ARE YOU IN THERE? STUDENT/TEACHER CONFERENCE, COME ON!
UHHHHHH, JOSH? WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU KNOW, THERE ON THE FLOOR, IN THE DARK?
THINKING.
ABOUT?
LIFE. DEATH. TAKING IT, AND GIVING IT. I GIVE LIFE. I TAKE IT.
WITH EVERY-THING MY POWERS CAN DO...REALLY, MISS PRYDE...WHAT *CAN'T* I DO?
OOOOKAY. GOOD MEETING. I'LL, UH, GET BACK TO YOU.

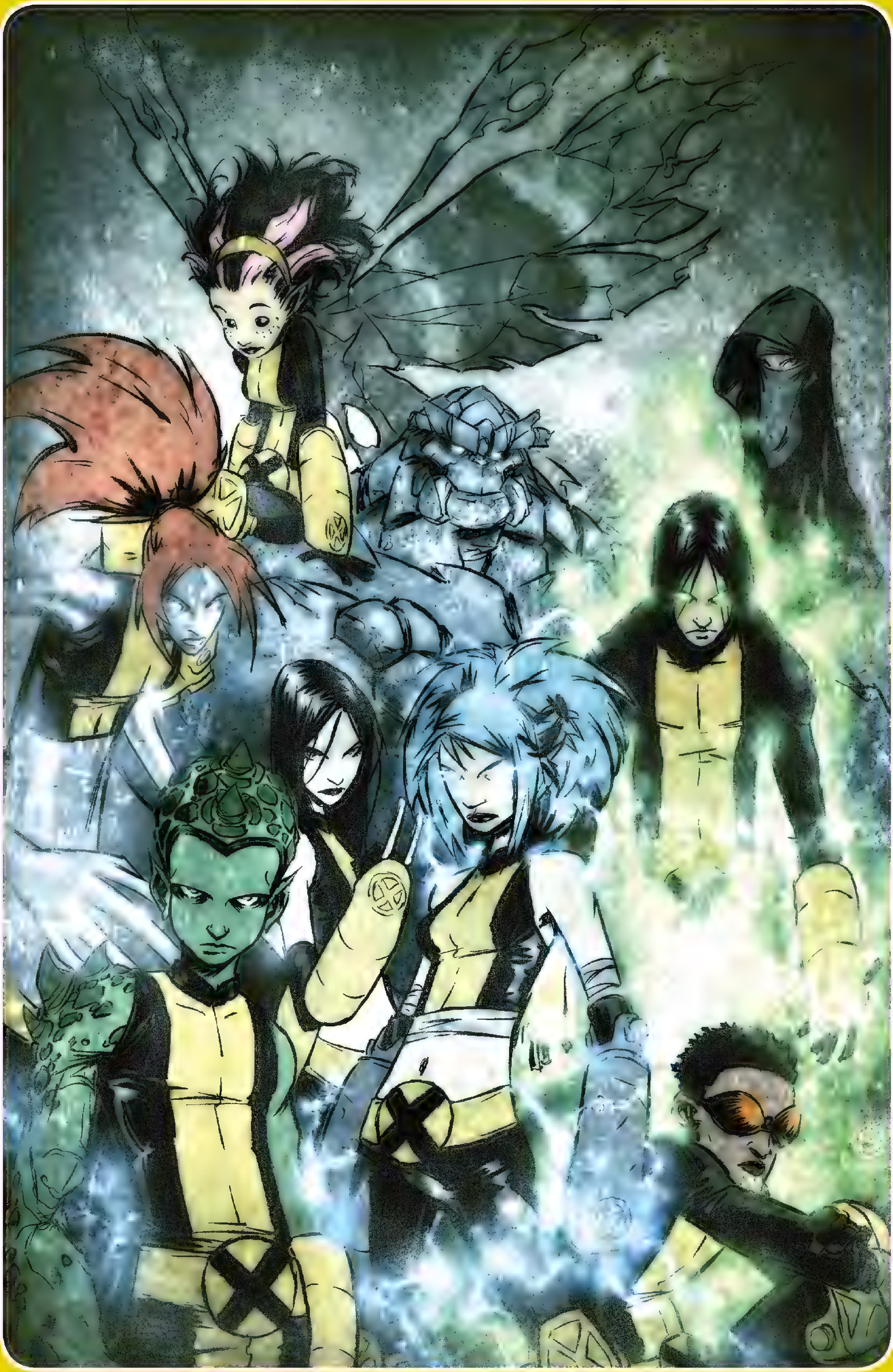
PIXIE'S YOUNGER THAN ME, I'M PRETTY SURE. EVERYONE THINKS IT'S HER. OR, YOU KNOW... YOU.
GREAT.
HEY...WHAT DO YOU THINK OF JOSH?
NO, HE'S OLDER THAN...OH, MAN, I HOPE IT'S NOT ME. EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT IT MEANS...
WAAAAAHHH!
$#%^ING UNICORNS!
I HATE THIS PLACE.

...AND BLING. THAT'S EVERYONE...
SO WHO IS IT?!
HANG ON, I'M COMPARING BIRTH DATES.
WAIT A MINUTE, HOW CAN THE CUCKOOS BE TWO YEARS OLD?
IT'S PIXIE. I MEAN, JUST LOOK AT HER.
NORI...I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU ALL DAY.
HOW'D YOUR MEETING WITH CYCLOPS GO?
I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.
INDRA, COME ON! HURRY UP!
THE YOUNGEST MUTANT ON EARTH. IT'S LIKE A ONE-WAY TICKET TO DEAD. IT'S LIKE HAVING TWO BULLSEYES ON YOU, AND IN THIS PLACE, ONE IS ENOUGH.

NORI, WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT'S THE MATTER?
WILL YOU TALK TO ME?!
UH, YEAH. IT'S YOU, NICK. YOU'RE THE YOUNGEST MUTANT ON THE PLANET.
EXCEPT THE RICHARDS' KID. AND BEAK'S KID!
THEY DON'T COUNT!!
WHEW.
OHGODOHGOD OHGOD...I WONDER HOW IT'LL HAPPEN...THE SENTINELS, I BET. OR MAYBE THE PURIFIERS AGAIN...THEY DIDN'T CATCH THEM ALL...
HEY, WAIT... INDRA, YOUR NAME ISN'T ON THE LIST. WHEN IS YOUR BIRTHDAY?
WHAT? IT'S...OH, NO.
IT'S ME. I'M THE YOUNGEST MUTANT ON THE PLANET.
NORI, JUST LOOK AT ME!

≠MPHFF!!≠
≠GASP!!≠
≠PSSHHH!!≠
NORI?!
SNIKT!
DUDE, INDRA...
...YOU'RE DEAD.

"WE'VE PLACED THE GARMENT AS INSTRUCTED. IF THE CREATURE IS IN THE AREA, IT SHOULD FIND IT."
"WHAT IS THIS THING, A BURQA?"
"WORN BY A MUTANT. PREDATOR X IS DESIGNED TO HUNT MUTANTS BY SCENT. WE'RE JUST GIVING IT A LITTLE HELP."
HANG ON...I'VE GOT MOVEMENT.
"DEAR LORD."
"WHOEVER WORE THAT BURQA, FATHER MATTHEW..."
THEY'RE DEAD.
PRAISE BE TO GOD.



NEW X-MEN 43

"CHILDREN OF X-MEN" PART 2 OF 2

THE XAVIER INSTITUTE. EARLIER...
...DID GOOD, SURGE. YOU TOOK CHARGE, YOU GOT TO YOUR PEOPLE, AND YOU GOT THEM OUT. NO CASUALTIES. I THOUGHT WE COULD GO OVER SOME POSSIBLE STRATEGIES...
WHAT'S THE POINT? WE WON ON PURE LUCK.
NORI, YOU JUST DESCRIBED HALF OF ALL THE X-MEN'S "WINS."
I'M A LITTLE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR TEMPER. LEADERSHIP THROUGH ANGER WILL ONLY GET YOU SO FAR. YOU NEED TO KEEP YOUR EMOTIONS UNDER--
HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN JEAN GREY DIED?
WHAT?
YOU LOVED HER, SO HOW COULD YOU DO IT?
WEREN'T YOU SCARED? HOW COULD YOU WATCH HER, EVEN *PUT* HER IN DANGER LIKE THAT? WERE YOU WORRIED SHE WAS GOING TO DIE, AND YOU COULDN'T PROTECT HER?
AND THEN...WHEN YOU COULDN'T...HOW CAN YOU LIVE WITH THAT? HOW CAN YOU LOVE *ANYONE* NOW?
WHAT SHOULD I HAVE DONE? TRY TO STOP HER? NOT LOVE HER? THEN YOU DON'T KNOW JEAN GREY.
YOU CAN'T MAKE CHOICES FOR PEOPLE, NORI. YOU'LL BE SCARED, EVERY TIME. BUT BEING HERE, BEING X-MEN, IT'S THEIR CHOICE.
AND YOU LOVE THEM *BECAUSE* OF IT.
THAT'S NOT...I CAN'T...NO. YOU'RE WRONG.
...
WHAT IF YOU COULD HAVE SAVED HER, BUT SHE HATED YOU FOR IT? WOULDN'T THAT BE WORTH IT?

NOW.
=MRFF! MRFFF!=
GET OFF! WHAT THE HELL, NORI?!
WHAT ARE YOU--
LAURA...
LAURA, WAIT! LAURA!

UM, SURGE? NORI? CAPTAIN?
WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT PARAS?
WHAT?
YOU KNOW... INDRA? HE'S THE YOUNGEST MUTANT ON THE PLANET, MORE OR LESS, AND HE'S GOING TO DIE! WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
DON'T LET HIM.
DRAMA.
I... GUYS... I'M REALLY SCARED. WILL YOU STAY WITH ME TONIGHT?
I CALL FIRST SHIFT!
WILL SOMEONE ***ELSE*** STAY WITH ME TONIGHT?

PREDATOR X.
ANIMAL-MUTANT AMALGAMATION, HUNTER.
CURRENT TARGET: SOORAYA QADIR, AKA DUST.

HELLO, DAVID.
WHAT DO YOU WANT? I'M BUSY.
WE KNOW WHAT HAPPENED, DAVID. WE KNOW WHY SHE DID IT. WE WANT TO HELP.
YOU SAVED US, DAVID, WHEN STRYKER CAME.
WE WANT TO HELP YOU.
WE WANT TO HELP YOU REMEMBER EVERYTHING YOU FORGOT.

AND WHAT DID I FORGET?
THE HUMAN MIND REMEMBERS EVERYTHING, BUT THE CONNECTIONS TO THOSE MEMORIES FAIL.
WE CAN RESTORE THOSE CONNECTIONS, ALL OF THEM.
EVERY SKILL YOU LEARNED, YOU CAN REMEMBER.
ALL OF THEM, RIGHT NOW.
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT MY POWER. I KNEW HOW TO DO ANYTHING SOMEONE AROUND ME COULD...AND YOU'RE SAYING I STILL KNOW? I'VE JUST FORGOTTEN?
YOU WOULD HAVE IT ALL BACK. BUT YOU WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO LEARN ANYTHING NEW.
NO...I'VE BEEN DOWN THIS PATH BEFORE... IT'S TOO MUCH. TOO MUCH.
WE FELT YOUR MIND WAS STRONG ENOUGH, OR WE WOULD NOT HAVE OFFERED. BUT WE UNDERSTAND.
WE THINK WE WOULD HAVE MISSED YOU, DAVID. WHEN WE COULD STILL FEEL.
...
STOP.
DO IT.

HEY, SANTO, THANKS AGAIN FOR STAYING WITH ME.
UH-HUH.
PRETTY QUIET, HUH?
YEP.
MAYBE... MAYBE I'M JUST WORRIED FOR NO--
AAAAAHHH!!
HAHAHAHA!
SUCKER! YOU SHOULDA SEEN THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE. I SWEAR, I'VE NEVER SEEN SOMEONE LOOK SO SCARED...
I'M GOING TO BED.

LAURA? LAURA, ARE YOU IN--
OH, DEAR GOD.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME. I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M FEELING.
AND I'M SCARED I'M GOING TO HURT SOMEONE.
OH, LAURA...
SHHHH... IT'S OKAY. EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE OKAY.
YOU'RE NOT ALONE ANYMORE.

JULIAN? ARE YOU WELL?
NOT REALLY, SOORAYA.
MY BEST FRIEND IS DEAD, THE GIRL I THOUGHT I LOVED IS GONE, MY MENTOR FLIPPED OUT, I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT A GIRL WHO LITERALLY SCARES ME, AND NOW... NORI.
IT'S TOO HARD.
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN SO SURE, AND NOW I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TO DO, AND THERE'S NO ONE TO SHOW ME.
I...I AM SORRY, I DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO SAY. I THOUGHT YOU WOULD JUST BE ANGRY.
DID CESSILY SEND YOU UP HERE?
...YES.
THANKS, SOORAYA.
I...I... YOU'RE WELCOME?

I HATE YOU, SANTO.
WHAT?! EVERYBODY LOVES A CAMPFIRE.
THE LAST TIME WE DID THIS, WE ALL GOT SUCKED INTO HELL. YOU KNOW...*TWO DAYS AGO!*
IF WE WAIT HERE LONG ENOUGH, SOME HORRIBLE *THING* IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO US. SOME RANDOM, SNARLING MONSTER IS GOING TO CRASH THROUGH THAT WINDOW OR SOMETHING AND KILL US ALL.
THIS IS WHAT OUR LIVES ARE NOW.
YOU WANT TO LAY DOWN AND DIE, MATCH? INDRA? GO FOR IT. BUT NOT ME.
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU'RE THE YOUNGEST MUTANT ON THE PLANET, OR THE *OLDEST*. WE'RE *MUTANTS*. SO SOMEONE'S GOING TO COME GUNNING FOR US.
AND WHEN THEY DO...I'M GOING DOWN FIGHTING. BECAUSE I'M AN *X-MAN*. AND THAT'S WHAT X-MEN *DO*.
AND AT THE VERY LEAST...WE'LL GO DOWN TOGETHER.

NOW SHUT UP AND LET'S START BONDING.
I'LL GO FIRST: ANOLE'S GAY!
PLEASE... EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT.
...HATE... YOU...
HEY, IF WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE... WHICH WE *ARE*...WE MIGHT AS WELL GET IT OUT IN THE OPEN.
BESIDES, I'M COOL WITH IT. MORE CHICKS FOR ME.
ATTENTION, MY LITTLE X-PROGENY, I--SAY, DO I SMELL S'MORES?
HI, PROFESSOR. WE'RE HAVING A CAMPFIRE.
INDOORS? WELL PLAYED. I HAVE NEW UNIFORMS FOR YOU.
UGH. REALLY? DO WE HAVE TO?
THEY'RE BULLET-PROOF.
OH, HEY...
I NEEDED A NEW COSTUME...
SIGN ME UP!
CAN I HAVE TWO?

I'M STAYING, NORI.
DAVID?
PRODIGY. MY NAME IS PRODIGY. AND IF THIS IS THE END OF MUTANTKIND... I STAND WITH THE INSTITUTE.
THIS IS MY HOME, THIS IS WHERE I BELONG. YOU DON'T GET TO MAKE THAT DECISION FOR ME.
NO! YOU'RE GOING TO DIE IF YOU STAY HERE, AND I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN! DO YOU HEAR ME?
WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO GET YOU TO LEAVE?!
THROW YOU OUT? TELL ME!
=NNNPH!=
I DON'T WANT YOU HERE! I DON'T LOVE YOU!
LEAVE!

YOU'RE POWERLESS! YOU'RE USELESS!
I LOVE JULIAN! WHAT DO I HAVE TO SAY TO MAKE YOU *UNDERSTAND?!*
THOK!
I UNDERSTAND MORE THAN YOU KNOW.
DAVID?!
HEY!!
OH, DAMMIT...

GET AWAY FROM HER!
fWOOSH!
DID HE HURT YOU?!
ARE YOU INSANE, JULIAN? IT'S DAVID! HE WOULDN'T--
THUK!
≠HKK!≠

AHH!
CRACK!
UHHH!
CHOK!
ISRAELI SPECIAL FORCES TRAINING. WOLVERINE AND SHADOWCAT KNOW IT, AND NOW I DO, TOO.
THERE ARE THREE PARTS OF THE BODY THAT ARE ESSENTIALLY UNBREAKABLE. I JUST USED ALL THREE ON YOU.
=HKK=... DIDN'T...=HK=... KISS HER...
I KNOW THAT, JULIAN. YOU SHOULD GO SEE JOSH FOR YOUR RIBS.
BY THE WAY, NORI...
...WE'RE THROUGH.

THE ASTRAL PLANE.
XAVIER INSTITUTE FACULTY MEETING.
I'M WORRIED ABOUT JOSH FOLEY... HAVE ANY OF YOU TALKED TO HIM SINCE LIMBO? HE'S KIND OF SPOOKY.
AND IF WHAT THE STUDENTS SAY HE DID IS TRUE...RECONSTRUCTING DAVID ALLEYNE'S HEART... THEN HE'S TAKEN A MASSIVE LEAP IN THE USE OF HIS POWERS.
CERTAINLY NOTHING WE'VE TAUGHT HIM, GIVEN WE'VE ONLY HELD A FEW BASIC TRAINING SESSIONS SINCE M-DAY.
YOU SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT PIXIE.
BECAUSE IF SHE EVER USES THAT $#*%ING PIXIE DUST ON ME AGAIN, I'M GOING TO KILL HER.
THE STUDENTS SEEM TO THINK THAT THE YOUNGEST AMONG THEM IS DESTINED TO DIE...A STUDENT NAMED INDRA.
THERE'S NO REASON FOR THEM TO THINK THIS, IS THERE?
MORE THAN HALF THE STUDENTS HAVE SERIOUS EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA FROM THE EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW MONTHS.
THE DECIMATION, THE PURIFIER ATTACK, LIMBO...IT IS WELL BEYOND TAKING ITS TOLL.
THEY MAY HAVE SINGLED OUT INDRA, BUT THEY TRUTHFULLY BELIEVE THEY ARE ALL GOING TO DIE.
YAY, SCHOOL SPIRIT.
IS THIS WHAT IT HAS COME TO?

"IF NOBODY DIES...
"...IF NOBODY IS TORTURED...
"...IF NOBODY'S SOUL IS TORN APART...
"CHYORT VOZMEE, MY FRIENDS...IS THIS TRULY HOW WE MEASURE A 'GOOD' DAY NOW?"
"PRETTY MUCH, PETEY."
"I DON'T KNOW, GUYS...I STILL THINK ELIXIR IS A REAL PROBLEM. IF WE DON'T COME UP WITH SOMETHING, I THINK WE COULD BE TEACHING THE NEXT MAGNETO."

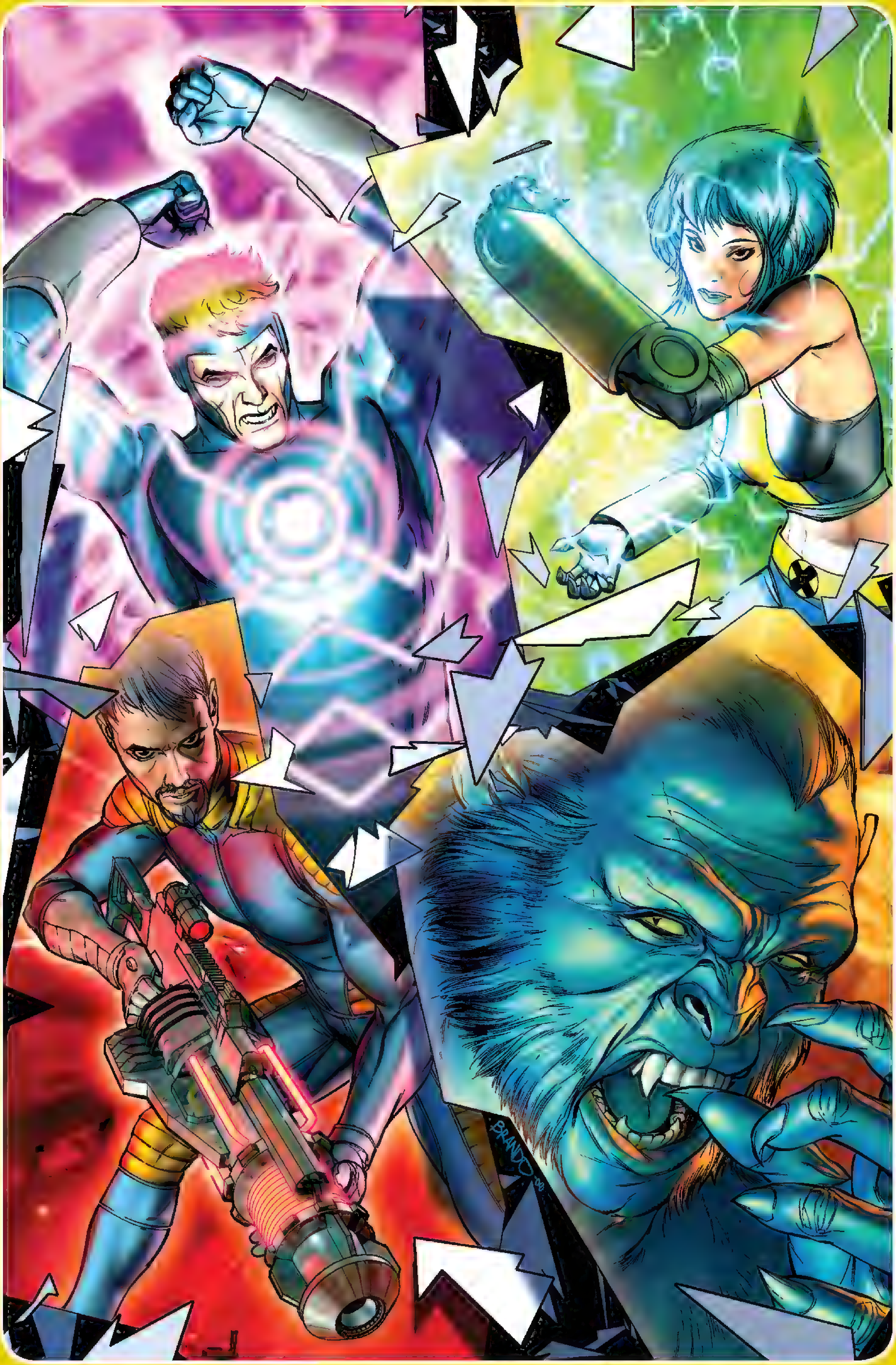
"I MEAN, REALLY...
"...HOW DO YOU GET A TEENAGER TO STOP BEING ALL DARK AND TWISTY?"
JOSH?
ALANI?
HI.
I'VE...I'VE BEEN DOING A LOT OF THINKING LATELY. WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN THROUGH, AND THINKING THAT IT'S GOING TO GET WORSE...
AND I WAS WONDERING...I WONDERED...
DO YOU WANT TO MAKE OUT?
I... UH...
UH... SURE?

YOU MAY BE THE LAST GENERATION OF X-MEN. WE MAY ALL DIE TOMORROW, WE MAY DIE A YEAR FROM NOW, OR WE MAY LIVE FOREVER, LIKE WOLVERINE HERE.
LUCKY ME.
BUT UNTIL THAT DAY COMES, THIS IS A *SCHOOL*. AND YOU HAVE WORK TO DO. TEAM-BUILDING EXERCISES WILL NOW BE A DAILY PART OF YOUR LIVES AGAIN.
INDIVIDUAL POWER TRAINING WILL ALSO RESUME. IF NONE OF THE SENIOR STAFF IS AVAILABLE, PRODIGY WILL SUBSTITUTE UNTIL WE RETURN.
YOU'RE THE NEW X-MEN. AND YOU'VE STILL GOT A LOT TO LEARN.
ARE YOU OKAY WITH THIS, SURGE?
FINE. I'M FINE. LET'S GET TO WORK.

DEAR LORD...WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT THING GO?
IT'S BEEN RUNNING FLAT OUT AT A HUNDRED MILES AN HOUR FOR 19 HOURS WITHOUT STOPPING.
COMMAND, ARE YOU GETTING THIS?
WAIT... IT'S STOPPING.
I REPEAT, PREDATOR X HAS STOPPED.
SNIFF!!
COMMAND, DO YOU COPY? IT'S LEAVING THE TARGET ZONE...PREDATOR X HAS REVERSED DIRECTION AND IS HEADING NORTHWEST!

NO!
IT WAS ONLY A MILE FROM THE INSTITUTE... WHY WOULD IT LEAVE?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
MATTHEW... PERHAPS IT *HAS* FOUND ITS INTENDED TARGET.
GOD HAVE MERCY...
IT IS AS THE REVEREND STRYKER FORETOLD.
COME, PURIFIERS... WE HAVE MUCH TO DO.
TO BE CONTINUED IN X-MEN: MESSIAH COMPLEX

In the MESSIAH COMPLEX crossover, the birth of the first new mutant since M-Day threw the X-Men and New X-Men into a multipronged war to protect the newborn from the Purifiers, Predator X, the Marauders and more. In the end, the X-Men triumphed and Cable took the infant into the future to raise her, but the X-Mansion was destroyed. Cyclops relocated the X-Men to San Francisco, hoping for a fresh start.



X-MEN: DIVIDED WE STAND 2

I WAS AN IMPATIENT CHILD GROWING UP...
WHEN DO I GET TO DRIVE THE TRACTOR, FATHER? WHEN CAN I PLOW THE FIELDS?
...ALWAYS LOOKING AHEAD TO THE FUTURE.
WHEN CAN WE JOIN PIOTR IN AMERICA? WILL WE EVER GET POWERS LIKE HIS?
AND WHENEVER I WOULD GET TOO FAR AHEAD OF MYSELF, MY FATHER WOULD ALWAYS QUOTE AN OLD RUSSIAN PROVERB...
EVERY SEED KNOWS ITS TIME, LITTLE SNOWFLAKE.
THEN HE'D TAKE OUT HIS OLD POCKET WATCH AND THIS SERIOUS LOOK WOULD CROSS HIS FACE.
HE'D JUST STARE AT IT AS THE SECONDS TICKED BY...
...LIKE HE WAS HOPING TO STOP TIME FROM PASSING.
12
9
3
6
Cebulski
OR PRAYING TO TURN THE CLOCK BACK ALTOGETHER.

ILLYANA RASPUTIN in PLANTING SEEDS

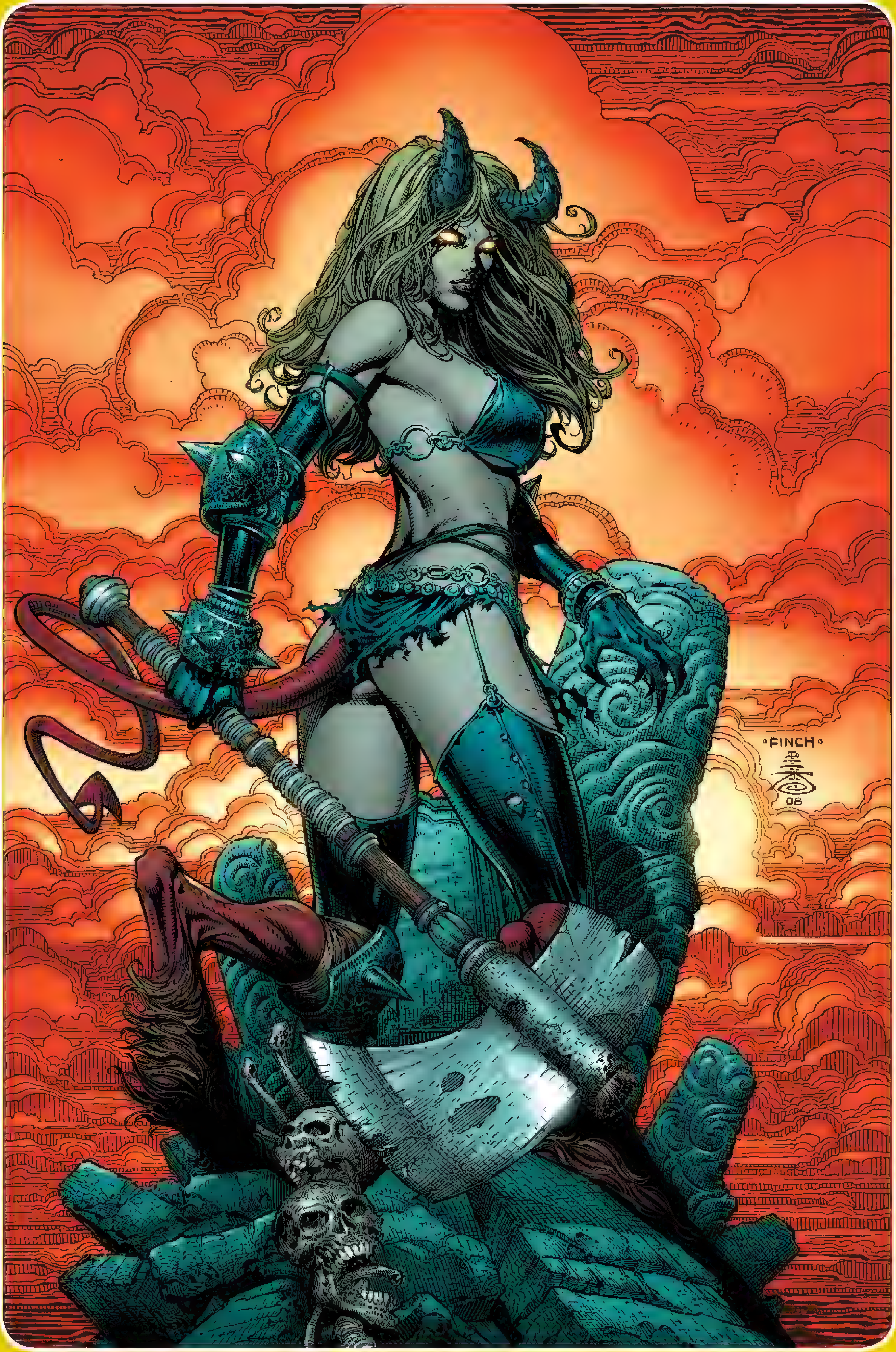
HOWEVER, I BETTER UNDERSTAND MY FATHER'S REACTION TOWARDS HIS TIMEPIECE...
...AS I NOW HAVE A SIMILAR TRINKET.
REMINDS ME OF THE YEARS OF MY LIFE I'VE LOST SUFFERING HERE IN LIMBO.

FIVE BLOODSTONES ARE ALL THAT ARE NEEDED TO GET MY SOUL BACK. TO GET MY *LIFE* BACK!
BUT AT WHAT COST?!
NO! I CANNOT THINK LIKE THAT. TOO MANY LIVES HAVE BEEN RUINED ALREADY BY THIS MEDALLION!
THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY.
I CANNOT ALLOW OTHERS TO SUFFER AS I HAVE!
I REFUSE TO FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE MAN WHO TRANSFORMED ME INTO THIS DEMON...
BELASCO!
YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD MOLD ME TO YOUR TWISTED DESIRES, BELASCO?!
TRICK ME TO BECOME YOUR OBEDIENT "DAUGHTER" WHILE YOU SLOWLY STOLE MY SOUL?
WELL "DADDY DEAREST"...
YOU FAILED.

FOR I REMEMBER WHO I WAS.
WHO I *AM.*
WHO *I LOVE.*
I'M SORRY, PIOTR. IT MUST HAVE BROKEN YOUR HEART TO SEE ME HERE, ONLY TO HAVE ME SEND YOU AWAY.
BUT I JUST COULDN'T STAND TO FACE YOU YET. OR KITTY.
NOT LIKE THIS!
BUT THIS IS *WHAT* I AM. WHAT I WILL LOOK LIKE FOR A WHILE LONGER.
AND I KNOW YOUR LOVE FOR ME WILL HELP YOU SEE PAST THAT.
YOU TWO WILL HELP MAKE ME *FEEL HUMAN* ONCE AGAIN!

BUT AFTER ALL THIS TIME... I DON'T KNOW IF...
NO! I CAN DO THIS! THIS IS THE FIRST STEP.
TO RECLAIM MY SOUL...
...I FIRST HAVE TO RECLAIM MY HEART.
NO, IT CAN'T BE...
PIOTR?! KITTY?!
IT'S ALL GONE! ARE THEY...?

STORY TIME'S OVER, ILLYANA. TIME FOR BED.
NO, PLEASE... NOT YET. I DON'T WANT YOU TO LEAVE.
DON'T WORRY, LITTLE SNOWFLAKE, WE WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU.
NO! NO! NO! NO!
WHAT WAS I THINKING, COMING HERE...?!
PIOTR...KITTY... WHEREVER YOU ARE...IF YOU LIVE... I'M SORRY...
I CAN'T BE A PART OF YOUR WORLD!
NOT YET.
HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO STUPID?!
I WILL NOT GET MY SOUL BACK THROUGH LOVE.
ONLY THROUGH SUFFERING.
BUT I WILL NOT SUFFER ALONE. I WILL FIND THOSE WHO HAVE WRONGED ME AND MAKE THEM PAY WITH *THEIR SOULS...* NO MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES.
FOR AS MY FATHER TAUGHT ME...
EVERY SEED KNOWS ITS TIME.



X-INFERNUS 1

I WILL NOT BE DENIED!!
WE'RE NOT DENYING YOU ANYTHING, PETER. WE'RE DOING ALL THAT WE CAN.
"ALL THAT WE CAN"?! WE'VE DONE NOTHING, SCOTT!
I'VE DONE NOTHING.
IT'S BEEN MONTHS AND ILLYANA IS STILL TRAPPED IN LIMBO.
PETER, YOU KNOW WE'VE TRIED AND WILL CONTINUE TRYING.
LIMBO IS CLOSED. SEALED OFF.
AMANDA SEFTON HAS TRIED TO BREAK THE SEAL, BUT CAN'T. HANK'S TRIED TO GET DR. STRANGE TO HELP US, BUT HE'S NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.
EVEN WARREN HAS HIS PEOPLE TRYING, BUT THEY'RE SCIENTISTS AND... WELL, THIS IS MAGIC.
SHE'S MY SISTER.
THERE HAS TO BE A WAY, SCOTT.
PETER, THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO.

I CANNOT...I *WILL* NOT ACCEPT THAT.
WHAT IF IT WAS ***JEAN,*** SCOTT? WHAT IF THERE WAS ANY CHANCE THAT SHE MIGHT BE ALIVE?
TO WHAT ENDS WOULD YOU GO TO BRING ***HER*** BACK?
I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH, PETER.
ENOUGH, SCOTT!
I SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED AS MUCH FROM THE MAN WHO HAS LEFT HIS BROTHER FOR DEAD IN SPACE.
HOW DARE YOU?!
WHILE YOU MAY NOT CARE ABOUT WHATEVER FATE HAS BEFALLEN YOUR KIN...

"...I CANNOT STOP THINKING ABOUT THE SUFFERING MY POOR LITTLE SNOWFLAKE MUST BE ENDURING!"
CUT OUT THEIR HEARTS AND BRING ME THEIR HEADS!

LIMBO.
FIND ME MY SWORD! FIND ME MY AMULET! BRING THEM TO ME!!
THE UNCANNY X-MEN IN
X-INFERNUS
CHAPTER ONE
SOUL SURVIVORS

BWOOOM
I'VE COME TO CLAIM WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY MINE!
KILL ANYONE WHO DARES APPROACH.
YOU GOT IT, BOSS.
YOU KNOW YOUR MAGICKS ARE USELESS AGAINST ME, SORCERER.
JUST GIVE ME THAT WHICH I SEEK!
THEY'RE NOT HERE! I SWEAR THIS TO YOU!
I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOUR SOULSWORD OR BLOODSTONE AMULET ARE, RASPUTIN!!
NEVER ADDRESS ME BY THAT NAME!
THWAK

GIVE ME WHAT IS MINE!!
BELASCO TRUSTED...NO ONE... WHEN IT CAME TO...YOU...
THE SOULSWORD... AND THE AMULET... THEIR FATE REMAINS A MYSTERY...
KRUNCH
BELASCO!!
EVEN IN DEATH HE CONTINUES TO TAUNT ME!
THAT BASTARD RIPPED MY INNOCENCE FROM ME! HE STOLE MY HUMANITY!
NO MATTER HOW MANY HEADS MUST ROLL...
CHOK
I WILL HAVE MY SOUL BACK!

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.
BAMF
LET'S SEE HOW OUR LITTLE OVERACHIEVER--
WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?
PIXIE?! HOW DID YOU BEAT ME HERE?!

HOW MANY JUMPS DID IT TAKE YOU TO GET HERE FROM THE TRANSAMERICA PYRAMID?
JUST ONE.
I DECIDED THAT, YOU KNOW, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE IF I DO ONE TELEPORT OR TWO IF IT'S A SPELL THAT I'M USING. AND I THOUGHT--
YOU 'PORTED HERE DIRECTLY? WITH SUCH ACCURACY?!
DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?
OH, NO, *FRAULEIN*, PLEASE DON'T MISTAKE SURPRISE FOR ANNOYANCE. IF ANYTHING, YOU MAY DETECT A HINT OF ***JEALOUSY*** IN MY VOICE.
TO BE ABLE TO TELEPORT WITH SUCH EASE GIVEN YOUR LIMITED EXPERIENCE...
SO HOW ABOUT A FINAL RACE HOME?
JUST NAME THE ROOM!
THE DANGER ROOM.
YOU'RE ON! LAST ONE THERE'S A--
BAMF
HEY! NO FAIR!!
SIHAL NOVARUM CHINOTH!
BAMF
THAT SHOULD JUST ABOUT--
Ahem.

UNGLAUBICH!
CHEATERS NEVER WIN, MR. WAGNER.
LOOKS LIKE PIXIE SPANKED LITTLE BOY BLUE IN WHATEVER GAME THEY WERE PLAYING!
I'M SURE IT WAS MORE THAN JUST *SOME GAME,* SANTO! HE'S BEEN TESTING HER ALL DAY.
I'M NOT QUITE SURE WHAT TO SAY, *MEINE KLEINE FEE.*
YOU'VE FAR EXCEEDED MY EVERY EXPECTATION.
AND SO ENDS OUR TELEPORTATION... LESSON...FOR TODAY.
BUT IF I MAY, MEGAN, I'D LIKE TO DISCUSS ANOTHER TOPIC THAT WE HAVE IN COMMON...
CAN WE TALK ABOUT YOUR SOUL DAGGER?

WHY? WHY DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT *THAT?*
CYCLOPS WANTED ME TO--
WHY DOES CYCLOPS WANT TO KNOW ABOUT MY SOUL DAGGER? IS THERE A PROBLEM? AM I IN TROUBLE?
WELL, TO BE HONEST...PEOPLE HAVE BEEN NOTICING THAT WHEN YOU USE IT, YOU'RE NOT QUITE... YOURSELF.
I'M *"NOT MYSELF"*? THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE TO SAY?!
COLOSSUS' CRAZY LITTLE SISTER TOOK A PIECE OF MY SOUL! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THAT FEELS LIKE? THE EMPTINESS?!
I HAVE A HOLE IN MY SOUL THANKS TO HER!
PLEASE CALM DOWN, MEGAN. I'M SORRY TO HAVE UPSET YOU LIKE THIS.
WE GOT SUCKED INTO HELL.

A BUNCH OF KIDS IN LIMBO. ALL ALONE. ON OUR OWN.
DAVID AND JOSH AND CESSILY... BELASCO WAS GOING TO KILL THEM.
ILLYANA SAID SHE COULD CREATE A WEAPON TO STOP HIM...
...SO I GAVE HER WHAT SHE NEEDED...
...TO SAVE THEM.
AND NOW...
MEIN GOTT!
PIXIE, WHAT ARE YOU...

NOOO--

NO MATTER HOW MANY HEADS MUST ROLL...
I WILL HAVE MY SOUL BACK!
YOU WOULD CALL US ALL HERE FOR THIS?! WHY SHOULD WE CONCERN OURSELVES WITH A MINOR ANNOYANCE?
"MINOR" IS NOT THE WORD I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE WHAT WE JUST WITNESSED, FATHER.
INDEED, MEPHISTO. I ACTUALLY FIND MYSELF... *IMPRESSED.*
FOR ONE SO NEWLY-BIRTHED FROM THE FIRES OF YOUR HELL, HER POWERS ARE CLEARLY QUITE... FORMIDABLE.
LET THE ONE WHO SUMMONED US EXPLAIN THE NATURE OF WHAT WE JUST WITNESSED.
I SIMPLY WANT THAT WHICH BELONGS TO ME!

I AM BELASCO'S DAUGHTER. WHAT WAS HIS, IS MINE.
WHY SHOULD WE EVEN CARE, WITCHFIRE?!
YOU LONG ALLOWED MY FATHER A SEAT HERE AT YOUR TABLE...
BEGRUDGINGLY.
SATANNISH IS CORRECT. BELASCO'S PRESENCE HERE WAS TOLERATED AT BEST.
YES, HELA, MY FATHER HAD HIS SHARES OF TROUBLES... AS HAVE YOU ALL.
CHOOSE YOUR NEXT WORDS CAREFULLY, WHELP.
I MEAN NO OFFENSE, DORMAMMU. I SIMPLY WISH TO REMIND THE COUNCIL THAT BELASCO'S POWER AND HIS CONTROL OVER LIMBO REMAIN UNQUESTIONED.
CONTROL HE'S RECENTLY LOST YET AGAIN, IT SEEMS.
CONTROL I INTEND TO GAIN BACK...
...WITH THIS!

WHERE DID YOU--?!
ARE THOSE...
THE LOST BLOODSTONES, YES. AND WITH THEM COMES THE POWER OF THE ELDER GODS.
THESE ARE WHAT THE DARKCHILDE IS LOOKING FOR. THESE STONES AND HER SWORD, ALL CRAFTED FROM PIECES OF HER SOUL SO LONG AGO.
SHE BELIEVES THAT IF SHE CAN OBTAIN THEM, SHE CAN SOMEHOW RESTORE HER HUMAN SOUL.
BUT SHE FAILS TO RECOGNIZE THEIR *TRUE POWER!*
POWER THAT YOU, MY *"COLLEAGUES,"* DO INDEED RECOGNIZE.
THEN WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM US, WITCHFIRE?
STAY AWAY FROM LIMBO. IT IS MINE.
WHEN I'VE DESTROYED THE DARKCHILDE AND RETAKEN MY THRONE, I WILL RETURN AND TAKE MY SEAT AT THIS TABLE.
HOW DARE YOU--?!
ENOUGH!
TAKE BACK YOUR KINGDOM AND YOU MAY HAVE YOUR SEAT, DAUGHTER OF BELASCO. PROVE YOURSELF AND YOU *MAY* HAVE A PLACE IN OUR LARGER GOALS.
EXCELLENT.
"HOLY $#$@!"

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING, MEGAN?
NIGHTCRAWLER!!
PLEASE BE OKAY. *PLEASE* BE OKAY.
WHA... WHAT'S GOING...
OH MY GOD, *WHAT DID I DO?!*
YOU JUST KILLED AN X-MAN, DUDE!
SHUT UP, SANTO! HE'S BREATHING.
WE HIT THE "PANIC" BUTTON ON THE WAY DOWN, SO SOMEONE SHOULD BE HERE ANY SECOND!
OH MY GOD OH MY GOD OH MY GOD!
STAND ASIDE, CHILDREN! LET THE TRAINED PROFESSIONAL IN!

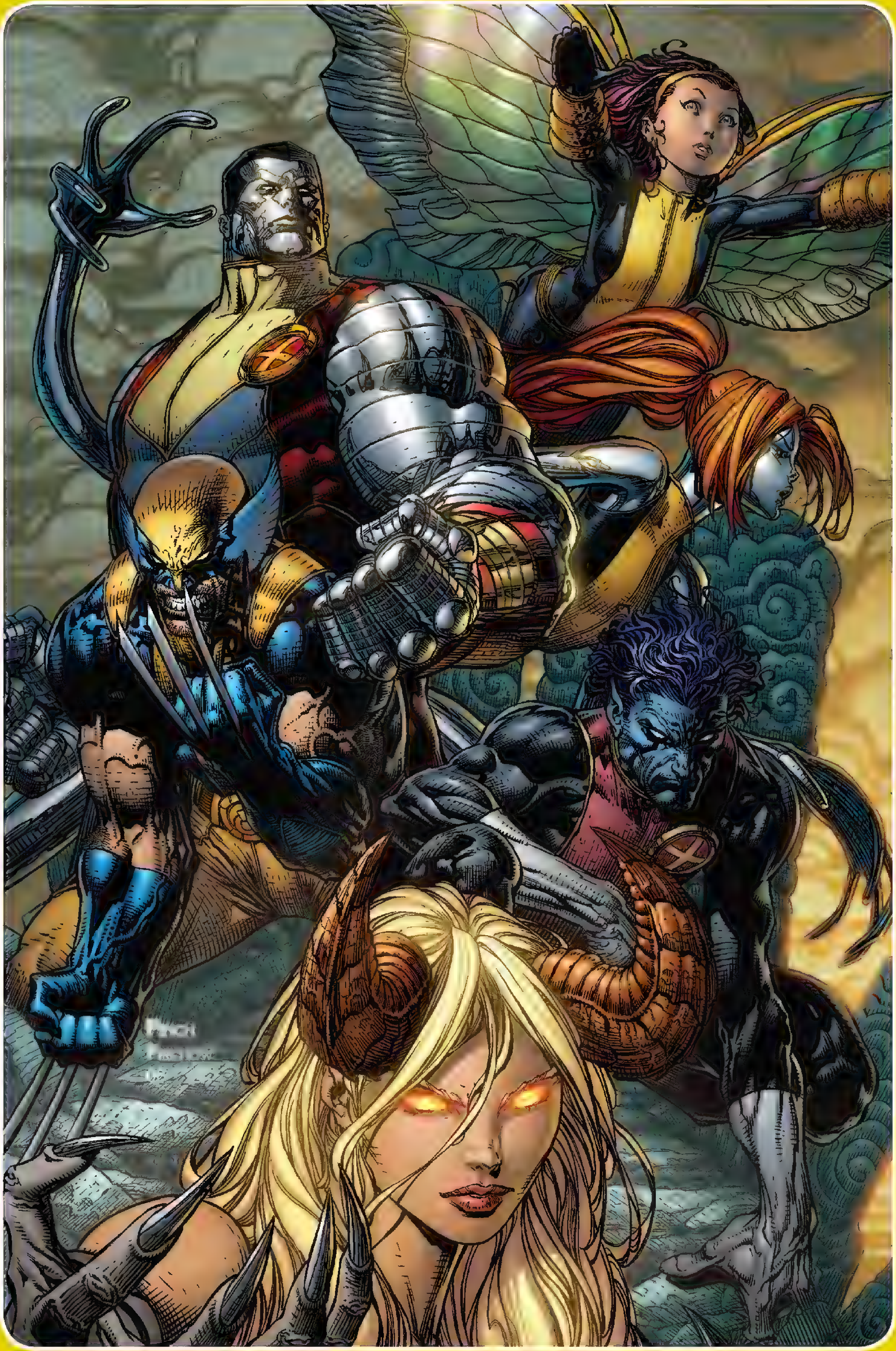
WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED HERE?
MAKE ROOM.
OH MY GOD DR. MCCOY I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED MR. WAGNER ASKED TO SEE MY SOUL DAGGER SO I PULLED IT OUT AND THEN IT WAS LIKE IT HAD A MIND OF ITS OWN AND THE NEXT THING I KNOW I'M ALL EVIL AND LIKE GRRRR AND THEN IT ALL GOES BLACK AND MR. WAGNER'S ON THE GROUND WITH MY SOUL DAGGER PLUNGED INTO HIS--
ENOUGH, MEGAN. HE'S BREATHING NORMALLY, AND THERE'S NO INDICATION OF ANY BLOOD LOSS...
...WHICH IS ALWAYS A GOOD SIGN IF YOU'VE BEEN STABBED IN THE HEART.
BUT WHY ISN'T HE MOVING? SHOULDN'T HE BE MOVING?!
I'M NOT QUITE SURE, MEGAN.
OHHH... IT'S ICE-COLD.
YEAH, IT ALWAYS IS.

CAN YOU PULL IT OUT?
YOU *WANT* ME TO?!
MEDICALLY, I CAN SEE NOTHING WRONG WITH OUR HERR WAGNER HERE.
AND WHILE MAGIC IS FAR FROM MY FORTÉ, EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT ME THAT THE LESS CONTACT YOU HAVE WITH ANYTHING MYSTICAL, THE BETTER.
SO MAKE LIKE KING ARTHUR, KIDDO.
BUT WHAT IF IT POSSESSES ME AGAIN?
WE'LL BE SURE TO WATCH OUR CHESTS...
DON'T EVEN SAY IT, SANTO!
IT'S... IT'S COMING! BUT IT'S LIKE THERE'S... SOMETHING... STUCK TO IT!

THIS CAN'T BE GOOD.

WE WILL NOT REST UNTIL I HAVE--
UNNNFFF!
WHAT IS--
SOMETHING THE MATTER, BOSS?
NOT A THING, SYM.
ALRIGHT... TOO MANY PEOPLE HAVE GLOWY WEAPONS INSIDE OF THEM.
MEGAN, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
IT'S COOL, DR. MCCOY, IT'S ME. I'VE GOT A HANDLE ON IT!
TOK
UMMM, PIX... ARE YOU GONNA BE ABLE TO HANDLE *THAT,* TOO?!

AT LONG LAST...
OH MY STARS AND GARTERS!



X-INFERNUS 2

LIMBO...
LADY WITCHFIRE! LADY WITCHFIRE!
THE DARKCHILDE IS GONE, YOUR HIGHNESS!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "GONE"? SHE WAS KILLED?!
IT'S UNCLEAR, MY LADY. IN THE MIDDLE OF BATTLE, THE SHE-DEMON SIMPLY VANISHED. EVEN HER TROOPS LOOKED CONFUSED.
WAS THERE AN ENERGY SIGNATURE OF SOME SORT?
YES, A YELLOW CIRCLE.
AND WITH THE DARKCHILDE GONE, SO GOES HER POWER OVER THESE LANDS!
MY LANDS.

YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT BELONGS TO ME!

THE UNCANNY X-MEN in

X-INFERNUS

CHAPTER TWO

THIS MORTAL COIL

YOU!
YES, LITTLE PIXIE...
OH, NOT HER. NOT AGAIN!
NOW GIVE ME MY SWORD!
PLEASE, ILLYANA, SURELY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS THERE'S SOMETHING MORE--
THWAK
DO NOT CALL ME BY THAT NAME!

GET BEHIND ME! I'M IMMUNE TO HER--
SHRACK
SANTO!!
HOW--?!
SHRAAK
THINK SOMETIMES, YOU IDIOT! YOU WERE MADE UP OF LIMBO ROCK LAST TIME WE FOUGHT HER!

WE HELPED YOU DEFEAT BELASCO AND *THIS* IS HOW YOU THANK US?
RETURN MY SWORD AND NO ONE GETS HURT.
SHLOK
ARRGGH!
HOW--?!
NOT SO TOUGH NOW, HUH?
IMMUNITY? IMPRESSIVE.
IS THIS SUPPOSED TO TICKLE? WELL THEN, IT'S WORKING.
UNFORTUNATELY, IMMUNITY IS NOT INVULNERABILITY!
FWOOOSH

MAKE THIS EASY ON YOURSELF.
GIVE ME MY SWORD!
NEVER!
IF YOU THINK I'M LETTING YOU GET YOUR EVIL HANDS ON THIS SWORD THEN YOU'RE CRAZY I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT IT IS BUT I KNOW YOU'LL PROBABLY DO SOMETHING REALLY REALLY AWFUL WITH IT AND I--
ENOUGH!
THAT AMULET!
MY SOUL IS IN THAT THING!
GIVE IT BACK TO ME!
COME TAKE IT.

GLADLY.
YOU'VE GOTTEN BOLDER, LITTLE PIXIE!
WHOOOOOSH
RRRAAGH!
ENOUGH. THIS FOOLISHNESS ENDS NOW--
GRAVATA SINOVA CLATORIM!

NO!
I WON'T LET YOU--
AAAGGGH!
UNNNFFF--
NNNPH.

FINALLY!

LIMBO.
THE DARKCHILDE'S CASTLE.
AND DADDY THOUGHT I DIDN'T LIKE GETTING MY HANDS DIRTY...
YOU HAVE... NO IDEA... WHAT YOU'VE DONE...
THE DARKCHILDE... WILL RETURN...
I'M COUNTING ON IT, BEAST!
HER FORCES... ARE LOYAL. THEY'LL... RALLY TO... HER SIDE.

SPLOK
ARRRGGHH!
THEY'RE NOT *LOYAL* TO HER.
THEY *FEAR* HER!
I SIMPLY NEED TO MAKE THEM FEAR ME *MORE*.

MY ARMOR...
MY LEGS...
CAN IT BE...?
BOZHE MOI.
SNOWFLAKE?
RRRRAARRRGH!
PETER?! NO--?
OH, NO... WHY DON'T I FEEL ANY...?
THE BLOODSTONES-- IT MUST BE...
ZRAKT
UNNFFF!

SHE'S STILL GOT A WEAPON. SHAN, SEE IF YOU CAN GET A LOCK ON HER.
IS THAT--?!
ILLYANA--
NO. I'M STILL NOT--
PLEASE, ILLYANA, DON'T LEAVE! WE CAN HELP--
NO, YOU CAN'T, BROTHER. NO ONE CAN. I HAVE TO SAVE MYSELF.
I'M SORRY...
NO!
NOT AGAIN!

WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED HERE, HANK?!
AN APPROPRIATE CHOICE OF WORDS, SCOTT, AS "HELL" IS INDEED WHAT HAPPENED HERE.
KURT'S HIGH BRAIN FUNCTIONS ALL CHECK OUT. IT APPEARS HE'S SIMPLY UNCONSCIOUS.
WITH NO PHYSICAL MARK OF ANY KIND WHERE HE WAS STABBED. INCREDIBLE.
ILLYANA STABBED KURT IN THE CHEST?! WHY?
OH, IT WASN'T HER WHO STABBED HIM, IT WAS--
LET ME GO!!
BE CAREFUL, LOGAN! I'M AFRAID PIXIE'S NOT QUITE HERSELF TODAY!
YOU OKAY, KIDDO? AN' LET'S KEEP THOSE HANDS WHERE I CAN SEE 'EM NOW...
THE DARKCHILDE'S GOT THE PIECE I'M MISSING! I'M GOING AFTER HER!
SIHAL NOVARUM CH--
DON'T... DON'T DO THIS, MEGAN...
PLEASE...JUST CALM DOWN. THINK ABOUT...THE SITUATION.
THIS ISN'T ABOUT... JUST YOU. WE'RE ALL INVOLVED NOW. WE'LL GO AFTER HER...
...TOGETHER.
I'M SO SORRY I'M SO SORRY I'M SO SORRY.

WHAT...?!
SPURLTCH
GET... OUT OF... HERE...
NO!!
S'YM?!
YOU... LOOK TERRIBLE.
WHAT HAPPENED... TO YOUR HOOVES...
WHO, S'YM?! WHO DID THIS TO YOU?!
BELASCO'S... DAUGHTER!
AND SHE...HAS... YOUR--
BELASCO HAD A DAUGHTER?!
HIS BLOOD COURSES THROUGH MY VEINS...

...AND *YOUR* BLOOD WILL DECORATE THIS ROOM!
CLANG

NO MORE EXCUSES!
WHAT FURTHER PROOF DO WE NEED THAT ILLYANA'S ALIVE?
PETER--
I AM THROUGH LISTENING TO YOU, SCOTT!
ALL THIS TIME WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR A WAY INTO LIMBO AND HAVE NOW FINALLY FOUND IT! IN THE UNLIKELY FORM OF OUR OWN TEAMMATE NO LESS!
I REFUSE TO WAIT ANY LONGER! WE'RE GOING TO LIMBO AFTER ILLYANA, SCOTT...
...AND THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO STOP US!
YOU DONE?

GO GET YOUR SISTER BACK, PETER.
WHAT?!
IF YOU'D LET ME GET A WORD IN EDGEWISE, I COULD HAVE TOLD YOU I AGREE WITH YOU.
YOU'RE RIGHT. WE'RE X-MEN. WE'RE FAMILY.
WE DON'T LEAVE OUR OWN BEHIND.
THANK YOU, SCOTT.
BUT THERE'S NO WAY I'M LETTING JUST THE FOUR OF YOU HEAD INTO LIMBO!
I'M SENDING ROCKSLIDE AND MERCURY WITH YOU.

WHAT?!
WE JUST GOT OUR @$$#$ HANDED TO US! AND *I* JUST BARELY GOT DONE PULLING MYSELF BACK TOGETHER!
SANTO'S RIGHT. WHAT KIND OF HELP ARE WE SUPPOSED TO BE?
ALONG WITH PIXIE, YOU KIDS WERE THE LAST TO TRAVEL TO LIMBO.
THAT MEANS YOU'VE GOT MORE EXPERIENCE DOWN THERE THAN THE REST OF US.
PLUS YOU'RE MAGIC-RESISTANT AND IF SANTO REFORMS HIMSELF OUT OF LIMBO ROCK, SO IS HE.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, ROCKY? WAS A TIME NOT TOO LONG AGO YOU COULDN'T SHUT UP ABOUT HAVING KICKED BELASCO'S @#$!
IT APPEARS IT'S COME TIME FOR YOU TO PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS, SEÑOR SANTO.
GONNA TAKE A LOTTA MONEY TO FILL THAT BIG MOUTH!
YOU KEEP SAYING YOU WANT TO BE TREATED LIKE ADULTS... LIKE X-MEN...
IT'S TIME TO START ACTING THE PART.

ONE OTHER THING...THERE'S NO DENYING THE FACT THIS IS AS PERSONAL AS IT CAN GET FOR YOU, PETER.
SAME WITH YOU, MEGAN. WE CAN'T RUN THE RISK OF EMOTIONS GETTING IN THE WAY DOWN THERE.
THAT SAID, I'M GIVING COMMAND OF THE TEAM TO NIGHTCRAWLER. YOU'LL FOLLOW HIS LEAD AND HIS ORDERS. NO ONE RAISES A FINGER WITHOUT HIS SAY-SO.
WATCH YOUR BACKS DOWN THERE, KURT.
OF COURSE, SCOTT.
COME NOW, THEN. I DON'T WANT MY SISTER SPENDING ANOTHER MINUTE IN THAT HELLHOLE!
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE UP FOR THIS, *LIEBSCHIEN?*
AFTER EVERYTHING YOU'VE SUFFERED ALREADY...
MY SUFFERING BEGAN IN LIMBO, MR. WAGNER, AND IT'S THE ONLY PLACE IT'S GOING TO END.
I'M GOING TO GET MY SOUL BACK...
...OR DIE TRYING.
SIHAL NOVARUM CHINOTH.

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR NEXT TIME, PIX...

FINCH 08
FIRCHOW

X-INFERNUS 3

HOW DARE YOU?

THE UNCANNY X-MEN IN

X-INFERNUS

CHAPTER THREE

WHAT YOU WISH FOR

LIMBO...
HOW DARE YOU?!
CLANG
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO BE HERE!
I HAVE NO RIGHT?
I HAVE EVERY RIGHT!!
FWASH

IT'S YOU WHO HAS NO PLACE HERE, GIRL!
LIMBO BELONGED TO BELASCO!
CLANG
FWAASH
ALL THAT WAS HIS IS NOW MINE!
INCLUDING YOUR SOUL!
NO...

THESE AREN'T THE DEMONS WE'RE LOOKING FOR...
LOGAN, MAXIMUM DAMAGE WHILE I GET OUR BEARINGS.
WAY AHEAD OF YOU, ELF.
AN' IT LOOKS LIKE PETEY AIN'T TAKIN' NO PRISONERS, EITHER!
YOU'LL ALL PAY FOR HER SUFFERING!

OH GOD OH GOD OH GOD. WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN US INTO?!
I THINK I'M GONNA BE SICK!
NOW'S NOT THE TIME FOR WEAK STOMACHS OR COLD FEET, CHILDREN!
YOU'RE X-MEN! DO WHAT YOU'VE BEEN TRAINED TO DO!
RRAARRR!
NOOO!
SHHWOK
AARRGGHH!
I'M PRETTY SURE THAT WAS NEVER PART OF OUR TRAINING!

MOST LESSONS ARE LEARNED IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE...
...AND SHOULD NOT BE SO QUICKLY FORGOTTEN!
SHRAKK
DUDE, WHAT'D YOU GO AND DO--
DOES THE CURSED ROCK HERE IN LIMBO NOT MAKE YOU STRONGER?!
RE-FORM YOURSELF AND DO YOUR PART, SANTO!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE YOU'VE DROPPED US, MEGAN?
I DON'T KNOW. I'VE NEVER TELEPORTED *INTO* LIMBO BEFORE!
DON'T MATTER MUCH WHERE WE ARE RIGHT NOW. WE GOTTA GET TO HIGHER GROUND BEFORE THEY SLAUGHTER US DOWN HERE.
LEAST THAT WAY WE CAN MAKE MORE OF A STAND AND--
--RRAAHH!!

RRRRRRRRRR...
RRRRAAAAAHHHH

SLASH
RIP
THUMP
NNGGGAAAHHH!!
OH, MY--
HE'S DOING IT!

GIVE IT TO ME!
IS THAT ALL YOU CAN SAY FOR YOURSELF?
SPOKEN LIKE THE CHILD YOU TRULY ARE!
GIVE IT TO ME!
COME AND GET IT!
YYEEAARRGGH!!
PARUMBA TANTUANA TIMATOME!
FWAASH
ARRGHH!
WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU... DOING?!
TA TA TA, THAT'S MY SECRET. BUT I CAN TELL YOU THIS...
...IT'S NOT GOING TO BE PRETTY!
SHLOK

AAAIIIEEEE!!
UMMM... DOES HE HAVE AN OFF SWITCH?
ALLOW ME.
YAARRGGH!!
SPLOK
THANKS, PETE.
YOU HAVE *OUR* THANKS, MY FRIEND.
THAT MAY HAVE BEEN THE COOLEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN!
MAYBE FOR *YOU*...
LOOKS LIKE I GOT US THIS FAR, ELF.
WHAT'S NEXT?
NEITHER PIXIE OR I CAN TELEPORT US BLINDLY ACROSS LIMBO, SO WE'LL USE THIS MOMENT OF RESPITE FOR AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE.
MEGAN, DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT I TAUGHT YOU ABOUT HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE YOUR ABILITIES TO--
THE ONLY POWER WE'LL NEED TO USE TO FIND OUT WHERE WE GOTTA GO... IS EYESIGHT.
LOOK!
BELASCO'S CASTLE!

SHLOK
YEESSSS...
NOW, WHY KEEP THE STONES DIVIDED...

...WHEN TRUE POWER LIES IN UNITY?!
FOUR DOWN...
CLANK
...ONE TO GO.
HAHA HAHA HA

ARRRGGGHH!!
MEGAN?! WHAT'S WRONG?!?
IT'S LIKE... LIKE THE EMPTINESS... INSIDE ME...IT'S GROWING.
MY SOUL... I CAN...CAN FEEL IT...
...CALLING TO ME...LIKE SOMETHING'S WRONG...
BE STRONG, MEGAN. FIGHT ITS PULL! DO NOT GIVE IN! YOU MUSTN'T--
I'M... I'M SORRY.
SIHAL NOVARUM CHINOTH.
NO! YOU'RE PLAYING RIGHT INTO ILLYANA'S HANDS!
KURT, 'PORT US OVER TO THAT CASTLE!
THE DISTANCE... IT'S TOO FAR FOR ONE JUMP.
IMPOSSIBLE WITH PASSENGERS. I'M SORRY...
WE AIN'T THE ONES YOU SHOULD BE FEELING SORRY FOR, ELF!

IS THAT...?
NO!
NOOOOO!!

DAMN YOU, ILLYANA! I WILL NOT BECOME LIKE YOU!
I'M GOING TO FIND YOU AND--
YOU NEED NOT LOOK MUCH FURTHER, GIRL!
WHAT TH--WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
YOU MAY CALL ME *MASTER!*
THE AMULET!!
MY STONE... IT'S GONE!
BUT HOW?! DOES THAT MEAN...IS MY SOUL...?

YOUR SOUL IS NOW MINE!
NO! I WON'T LET YOU...
YOU HAVE NO CHOICE IN THE MATTER... APPRENTICE!
GET USED TO THE IMAGE YOU SAW IN THE MIRROR, GIRL!
ONCE I FORGE THIS FIFTH AND FINAL STONE...

YYYAARRRGGH!!!
WAS THAT--?!
ILLYANA?!
TELEPORT ME TO THE CASTLE NOW, KURT!
I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU, I CAN'T--
I NEED TO GO NOW!
PLEASE... I'M BEGGING YOU. SHE NEEDS ME.
NO, PIOTR...
SHE NEEDS US. *ALL OF US.*
THANK YOU, KURT!
THANK ME IF WE MAKE IT.
GATHER ON ME NOW...
...AND PRAY I HAVE THE STRENGTH.
BAMF

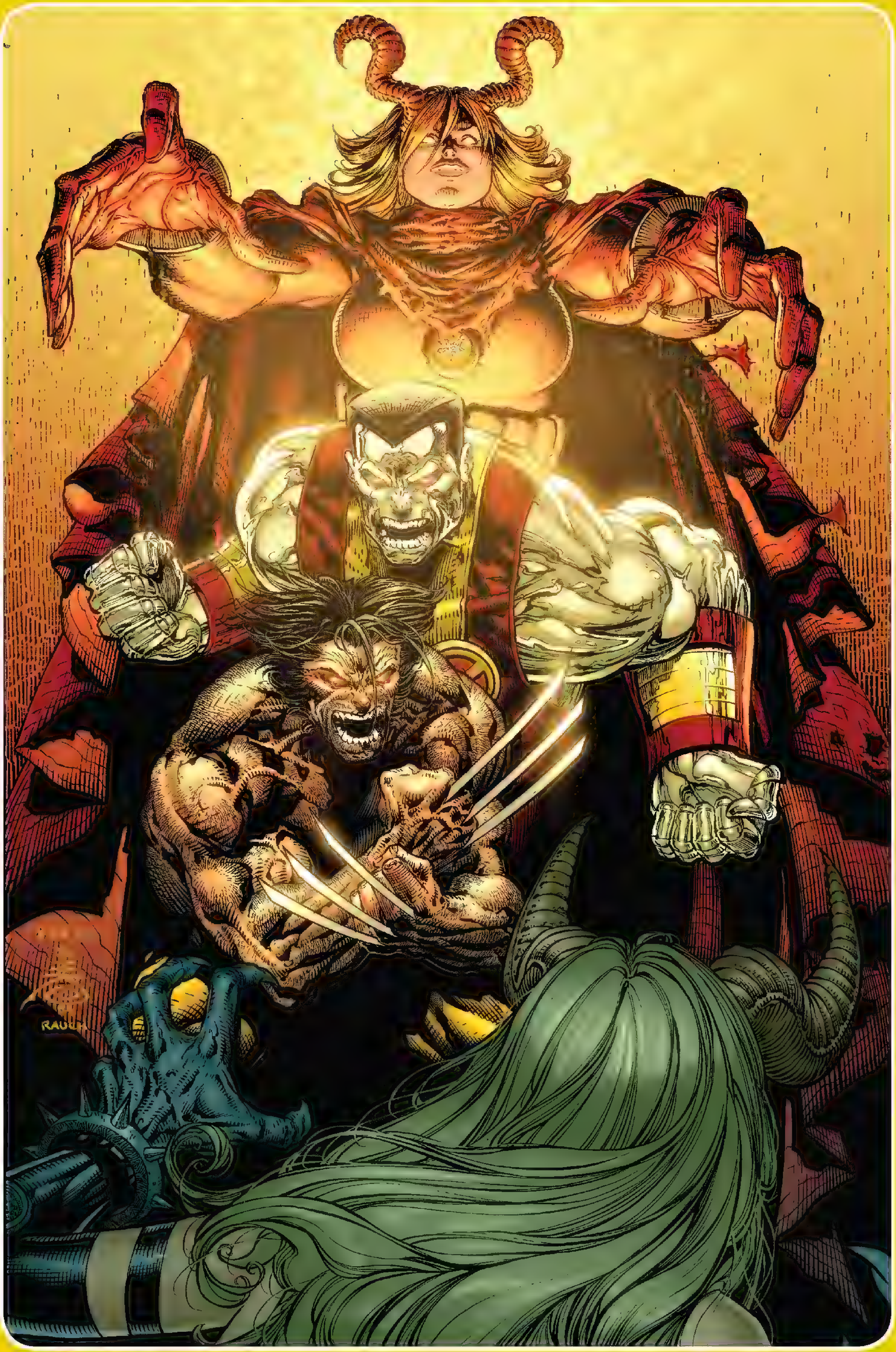
BAMF
NNOOOO!!!
WE MADE IT!
ILLYANA?!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO PIXIE, WITCH?!
SNOWFLAKE?
PIXIE'S SUFFERING WILL SEEM MERCIFUL COMPARED TO HOW YOU WILL NOW SUFFER, BOY!
BWWOOOM
UNNGGHH!

SLAASH
SOME OF YOU ARE LESS IMMUNE TO MAGIC...
WORST... FIELD TRIP... EVER!
SNAP OUT OF IT!

SLA-CRAK
MMMMPH!
WELL DONE, MY NEW SOLDIERS.
I MAY KEEP YOU AROUND AFTER ALL THIS.
KURT...

ILLYANA!
KURT... THERE'S NO TIME. THE DAGGER...
I HATE MAGIC!
BUT YOU'RE... ATTUNED TO IT. ABLE TO... USE IT...
...LIKE YOU MUST... NOW.
YOU KNOW... WHAT YOU HAVE... TO DO!
IS... IS THERE ANY OTHER WAY?
NO. YOU'RE THE... ONLY ONE.
I'M SORRY FOR THIS, ILLYANA...
NO...IT'S ME WHO'S SORRY... FOR EVERYTHING.

AAIIIIEEEEEE!!!
WILL THIS MADNESS EVER END?!
THWAM



X-INFERNUS 4

I SHOULD BE DEAD.

THE UNCANNY X-MEN IN

X-INFERNUS

CHAPTER FOUR

SOUL'S END

LIMBO...
BUT THE FACT THAT I'M NOT LEADS ME TO BELIEVE WITCHFIRE'S CONTROL OVER YOU BOTH IS FAR FROM COMPLETE.
SO ALLOW ME TO MAKE LIKE THE HANDSOME PRINCE...
...AND FREE YOU FROM HER SPELL, *MEINE FREUNDE!*
FORGIVE ME, *LIEBLING.*

NOW, TO BUCKLE SOME SWASHES.
DOES TOTAL EXHAUSTION EXCUSE A LACK OF CLEVER ONE-LINERS?

ARRRGG??
AH, YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE IN FOR.
EXCELLENT.
VRRAASSHHH

AARRRRGGGGHHHH!!!
YEESSSSS...
AT LAST!
AT LONG LAST!

MEIN GOTT.
BAMF
YOU'LL SPAWN NO MORE EVIL HERE, WITCH!
SHLUKK
ARRGGH!
SPLOK
TINK
YOU WILL NOT STOP ME NOW!
FWAAASSH
YAARRGGH!

WHLUMP
MEGAN?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
SHE STOLE MORE OF MY SOUL...MADE THE LAST STONE. WE'RE ALL...ALL DEAD.
SO...NO, I'M NOT ALL RIGHT.
YOUR TRAINING DID NOT INCLUDE QUITTING, PIXIE! THERE'S STILL A CHANCE...
WHAT... WHAT CAN WE DO, MR. WAGNER?
IT'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO, MEGAN. YOU HAVE TO FREE ILLYANA. THE CONNECTION YOU BOTH SHARE...ONLY YOU CAN--
NO, NOT HER! I CAN'T-- I--
REMEMBER WHAT WE SPOKE OF EARLIER...THIS ISN'T ABOUT JUST YOU!

TODAY I ACCOMPLISH WHAT MY FATHER...WHAT NO DEMON... EVER COULD!
CLINK
THE ELDER GODS HAVE NOW BEEN SUMMONED!
THE FATES OF OUR WORLDS ARE SEALED!

SCRASH
SCRASSH
YOU ARE NOW FREE! JOIN ME!!
THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO BOW BEFORE US!
ZRRASSSH
UNNNNFFFF!
WHO DARES...?!

WE DARE.
WHO ELSE?

AND HERE I THOUGHT I'D MADE YOU SUFFER ENOUGH.
NOW THE ELDER GODS WILL HAVE A TURN.
NOT EVERY DAY YOU GET TO KICK A GOD'S TEETH IN.
ME NO EATY!

AND *YOU*...HAVE YOU LEARNED NOTHING?
STOP TALKING AND KILL ME ALREADY.
FOOLISH IMPOSTER...
WHAT?!

HOW... HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE? WITH MY POWER--
YOU'RE POWERFUL, BUT YOU'RE NOT OMNISCIENT.
AAIIIIEEEE!!!

WELL DONE, MERCURY.
STILL DOESN'T MAKE US EVEN.
SLASH-CHINK
I NEED YOU AND YOUR DAGGER.
OH YEAH? WELL--
SILENCE, CHILD.
PIXIE! COME HERE!
WE CAN'T STOP THE ELDER GODS IF THE AMULET HAS ALL OF THE BLOOD-STONES.

WE HAVE TO BREAK THE SPELL... GET THAT LAST BLOODSTONE OUT OF THERE.
BUT...THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! ONCE A STONE IS EMPLACED...
THE BOND MAY NOT BE PERMANENT YET.
LIKE THE BLOODSTONES, OUR WEAPONS WERE FORGED FROM PIECES OF OUR SOULS. BY COMBINING OUR POWERS...
...MAYBE WE CAN GET THEM BACK!
NOW! DEAD CENTER!!
HHRRASSSHH

NAIL YOURSELVES DOWN, KIDDIES.
EASY FOR YOU TO SAY...

COME ON... ALMOST... GOT IT...
PIXIE, NO! LET IT GO!! YOU CAN'T RISK BEING SUCKED IN!
NO! LET ME GO!!
THAT PART OF YOU... STILL BELONGS... TO ME...
...MY APPRENTICE!
NNNNOOOOOOO!

MEGAN...? I'M...I'M SO SORRY.
I CAME TO GET THE MISSING PIECE OF MY SOUL BACK--NOT LOSE ANOTHER PART OF IT!
YOU! THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT! EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED TO ME IS--
WHAT--?! THE DAGGER'S BLADE...DOES THIS MEAN...?!
THE PART OF YOUR SOUL THAT WITCHFIRE STOLE IS IN THAT STONE.
NONONONONONONONO
PIXIE, WAIT!
LET HER GO.

ILLYANA? I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S YOU. ARE YOU OKAY?
NO, KURT. I'M NOT OKAY.
I AM A SOULLESS BEAST. A MONSTER.
AND AFTER ALL OF THIS, MY SOUL IS FURTHER THAN EVER.
OH, ILLYANA...
I'VE BEEN CALLED A MONSTER. I'VE BEEN HUNTED. HELL, I'M THE SON OF A DEMON. DOES THIS MEAN THAT I HAVE NO SOUL?
I DON'T KNOW FOR SURE. IT ISN'T SOMETHING I CAN TOUCH, SOMETHING I CAN CONTROL.
ALL I CAN CONTROL IS WHAT I DO.
I MAKE THE CHOICES I THINK ARE RIGHT AND THAT IS ALL I CAN DO. I *DECIDED* THAT I HAVE A SOUL.
COME BACK WITH US. COME BACK WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND PROVE TO THE WORLD THAT YOU DO HAVE A SOUL.
ILLYANA?

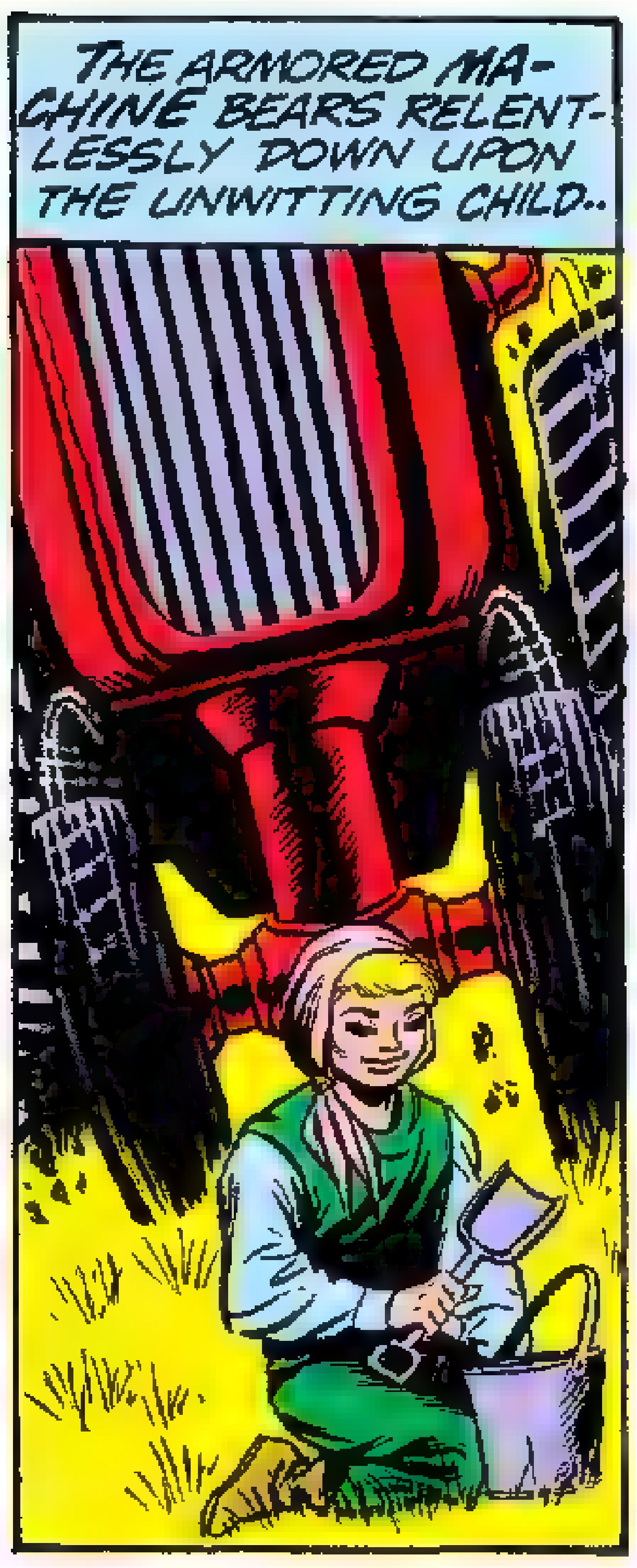
ILLYANA, PLEASE...DO NOT RUN.
NOT AGAIN.
YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW I'VE MISSED YOU.
PIOTR, I...I'M...
HUSH NOW, SNOWFLAKE. THERE'S NO NEED FOR WORDS.
NOT AFTER ALL THIS TIME.
LET ME JUST LOOK AT YOU...
NO! NO, I'M NOT MYSELF! NOT LIKE THIS...
PLEASE DON'T GO, ILLYANA!
OH, NOT THIS AGAIN...
THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME... THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME...

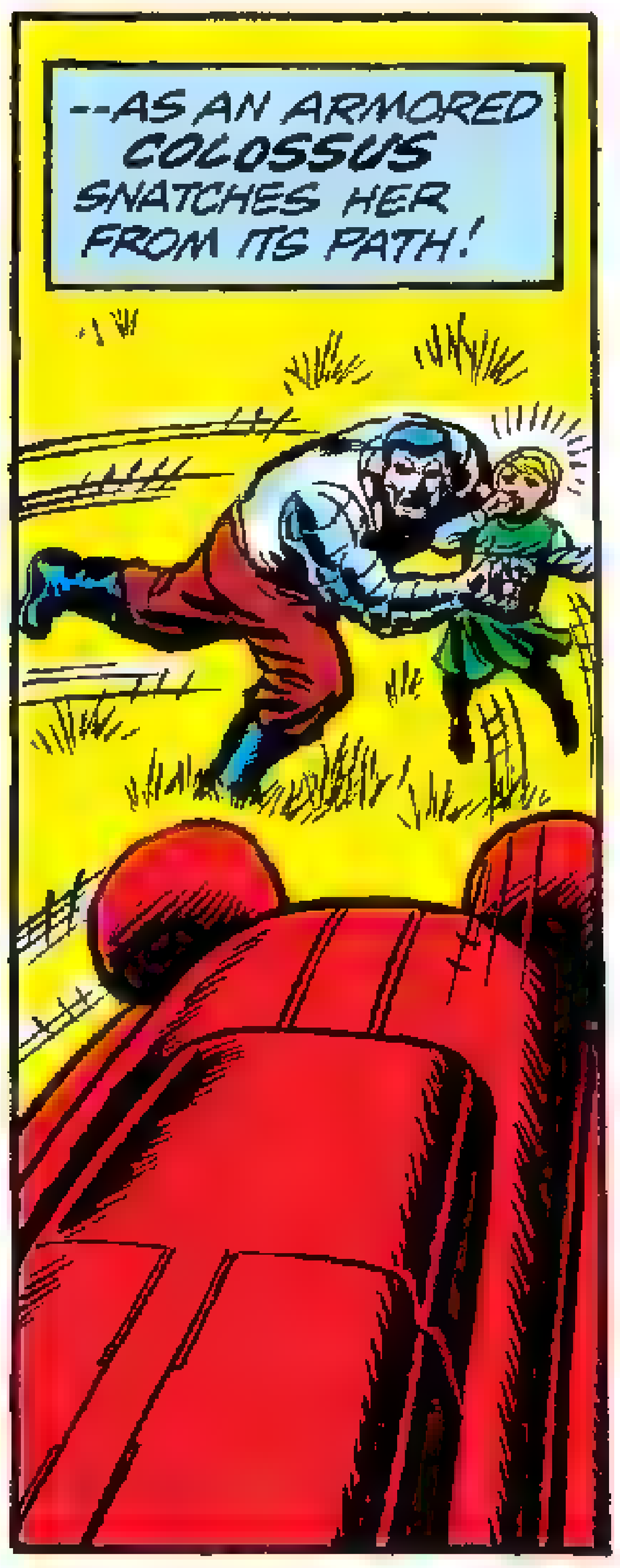
HEY, IT WORKED.
WHOA... *INCOMING!!*
THEY'RE BACK!!
THEY MADE IT!
AND *SHE'S* WITH THEM...
ILLYANA...?
THAT REALLY YOU, GIRL?
BE CAREFUL, SAM...
THIS ISN'T RIGHT! I CAN'T BE HERE. I'M SORRY--
PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME AGAIN!
DON'T LEAVE *US* AGAIN, ILLYANA!

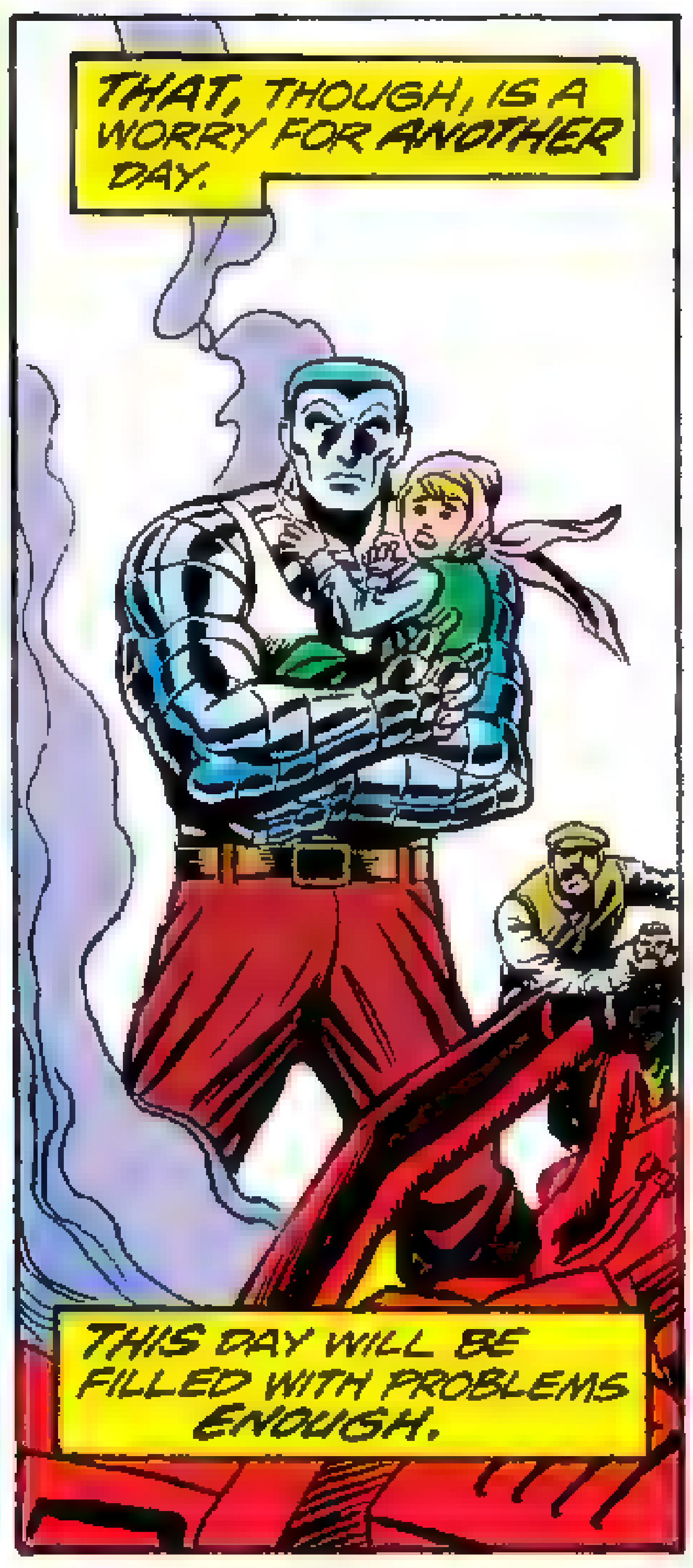
THIS IS YOUR HOME, ILLYANA.
STAY.
STAY HERE WITH US. WITH YOUR FAMILY.
AFTER ALL THAT'S HAPPENED TO ME...AFTER WHAT I'VE DONE TO YOU...
HOW... HOW CAN YOU--
HOW CAN WE *NOT?*
YOU'VE BEEN GONE A LONG TIME, ILLYANA. A LOT HAS CHANGED. THERE AREN'T A LOT OF US LEFT.
WE NEED YOU BACK. *PETER* NEEDS YOU BACK. NO MATTER WHAT'S HAPPENED, YOU'RE STILL ONE OF US...
...AND WE NEVER LEAVE OUR OWN BEHIND.
I LOST YOU ONCE, ILLYANA. PLEASE DON'T MAKE ME SUFFER ANY FURTHER. PLEASE...
I'LL TRY.
X THE END.

X-INFERNUS SAGA

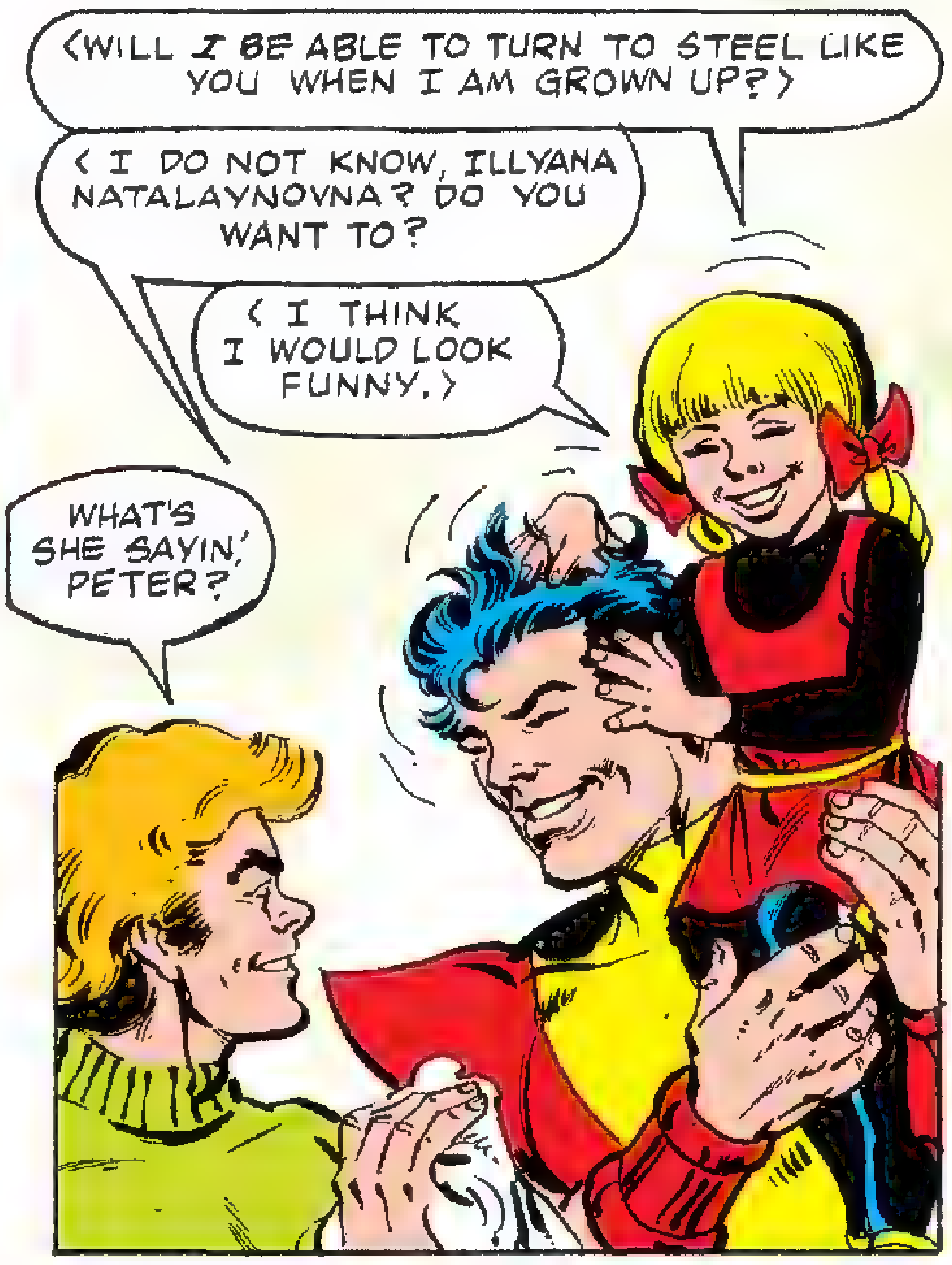
Here in Limbo, time has no meaning. Past, future and present are all the same ... and we demons can use Limbo's scrying pools and eldritch magics to view any time, any event, we wish. Gaze with us now at the sad tale of Illyana Rasputin ... the girl whose destiny would shake the very foundations of Limbo.


THE ARMORED MACHINE BEARS RELENTLESSLY DOWN UPON THE UNWITTING CHILD..

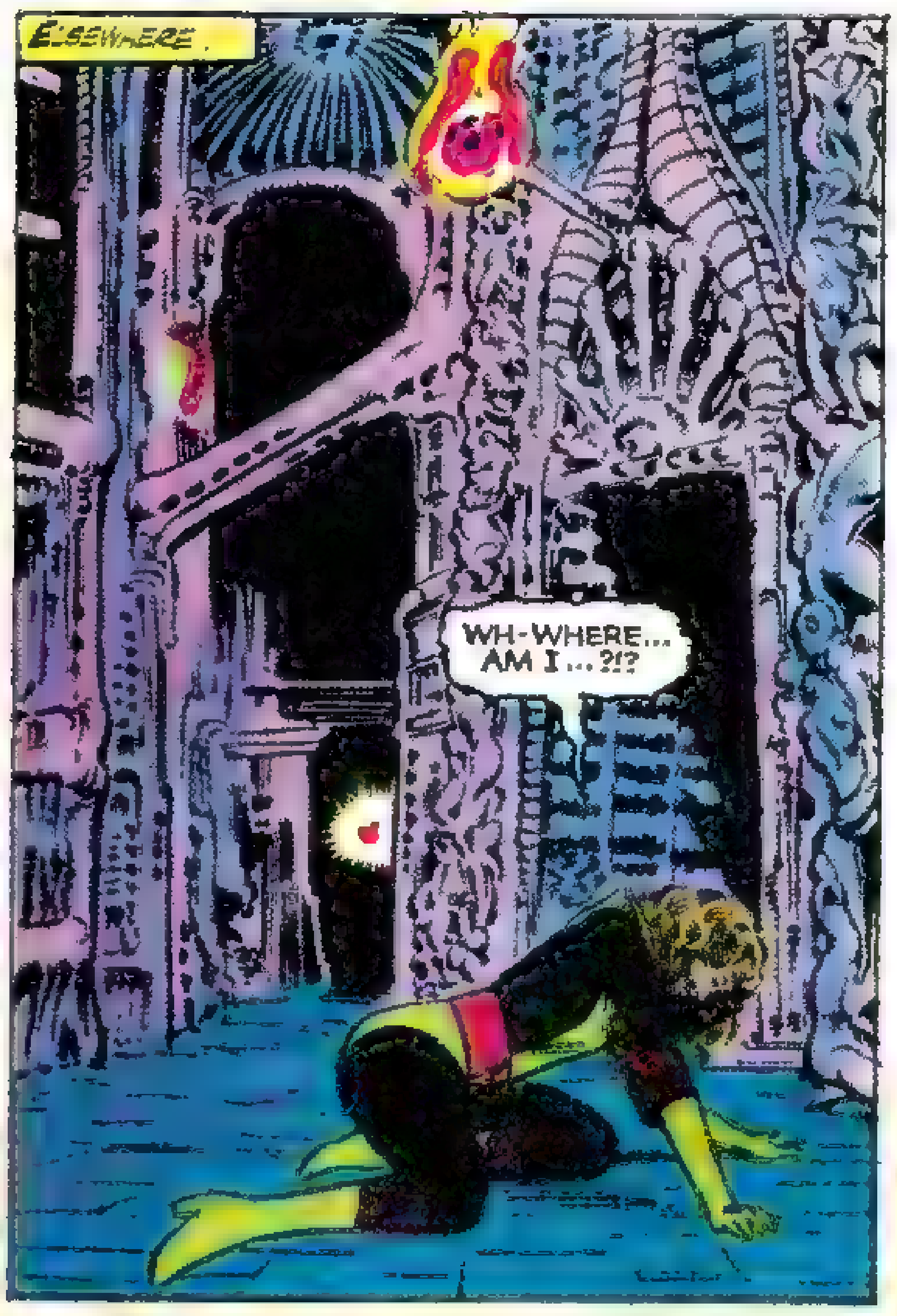

--AS AN ARMORED COLOSSUS SNATCHES HER FROM ITS PATH!

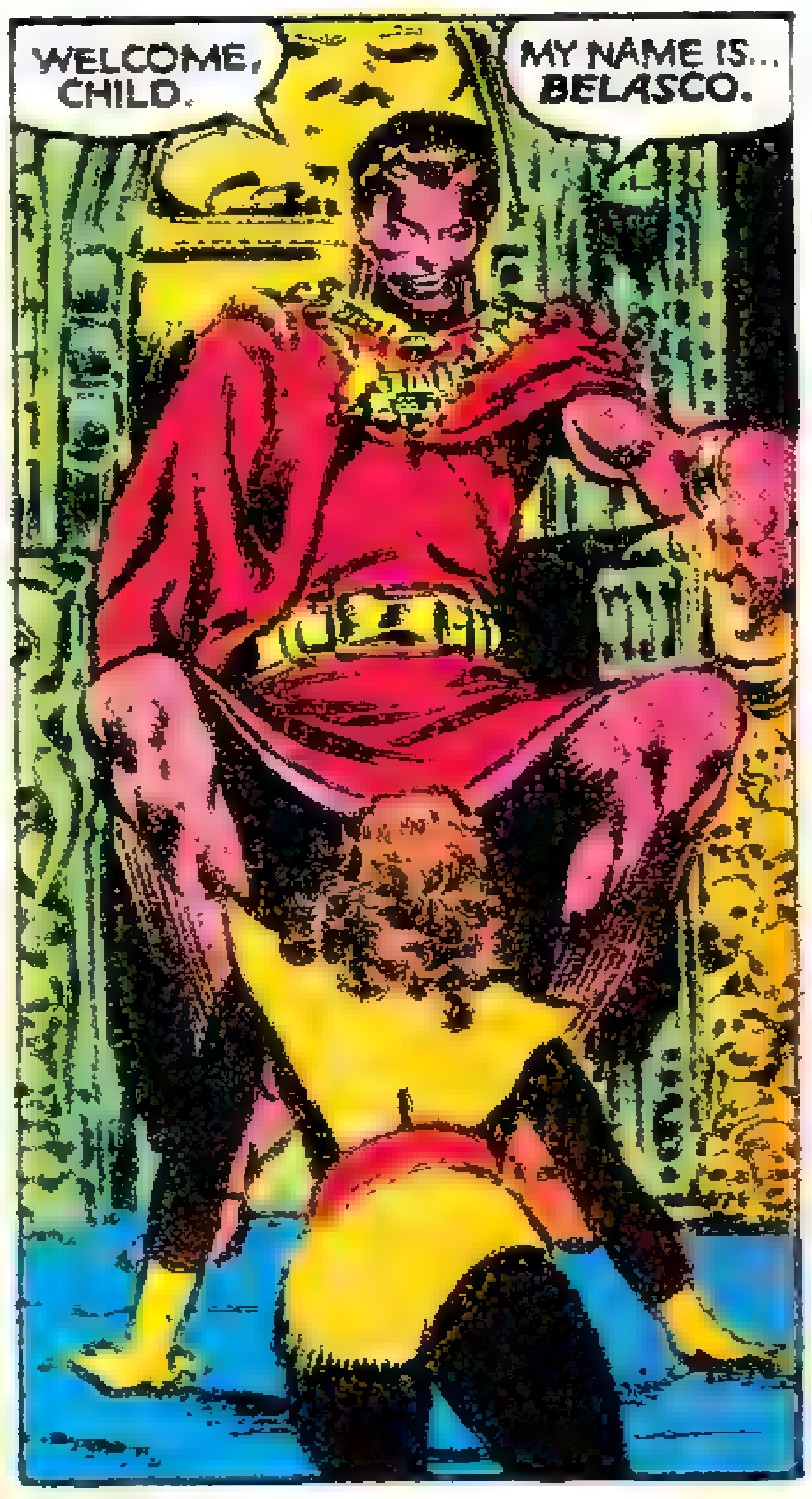

THAT, THOUGH, IS A WORRY FOR ANOTHER DAY.
THIS DAY WILL BE FILLED WITH PROBLEMS ENOUGH.

Born on a small farm in Russia, Illyana grew up blissfully unaware of her painful future. Her life was normal – until her older brother Piotr discovered that he could transform himself into organic steel. Piotr was a mutant ... and unbeknownst to young Illyana, so was she.


‹WILL I BE ABLE TO TURN TO STEEL LIKE YOU WHEN I AM GROWN UP?›
‹I DO NOT KNOW, ILLYANA NATALAYNOVNA? DO YOU WANT TO?›
‹I THINK I WOULD LOOK FUNNY.›
WHAT'S SHE SAYIN', PETER?

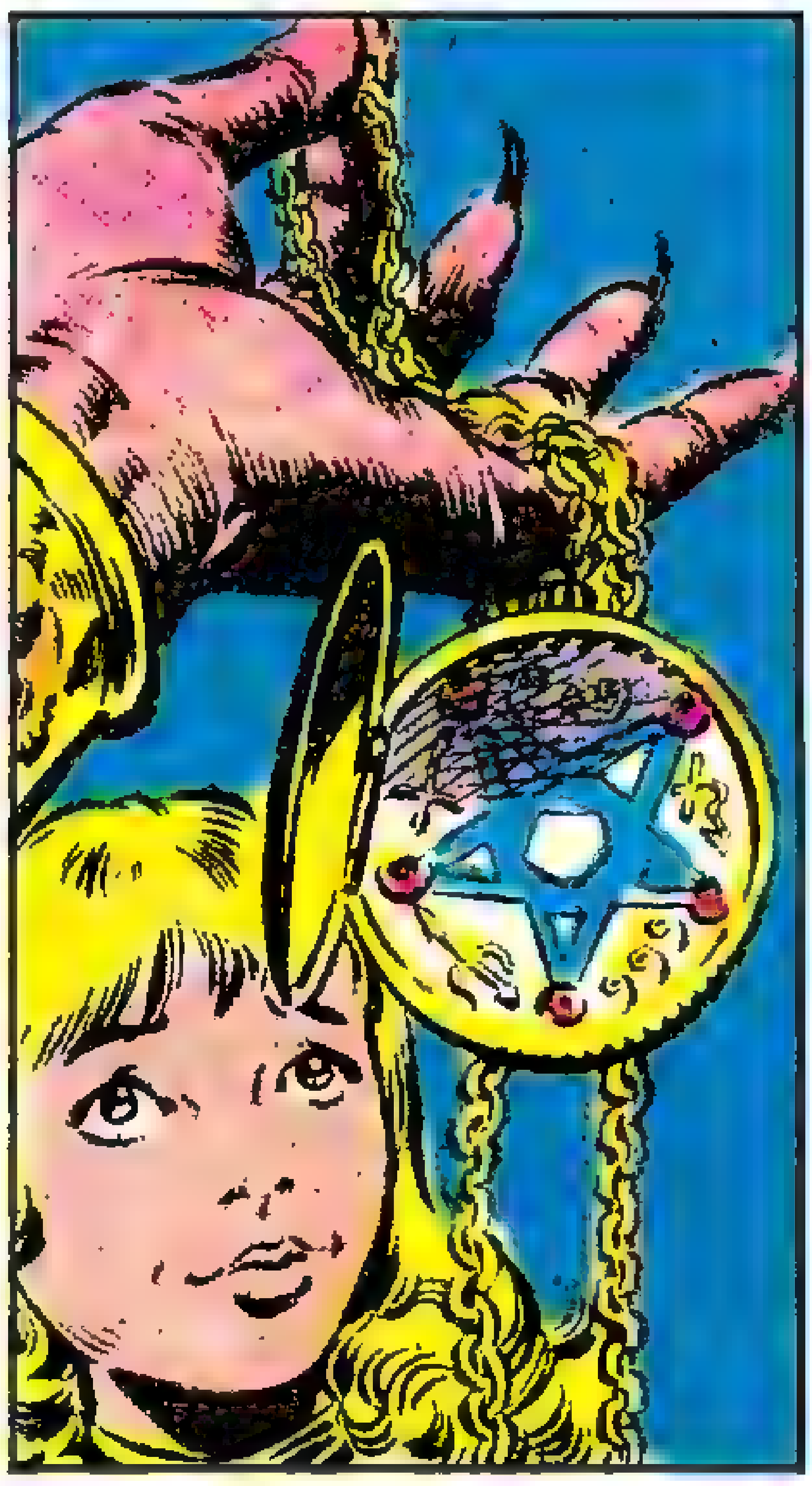
Piotr was called upon by Charles Xavier to join his band of mutant heroes, the X-Men, and he left his home behind to become the super hero named Colossus. Illyana eventually came to live at the X-Men's mansion as well, doted on by her homesick brother.


ELSEWHERE
WH-WHERE... AM I...?!?

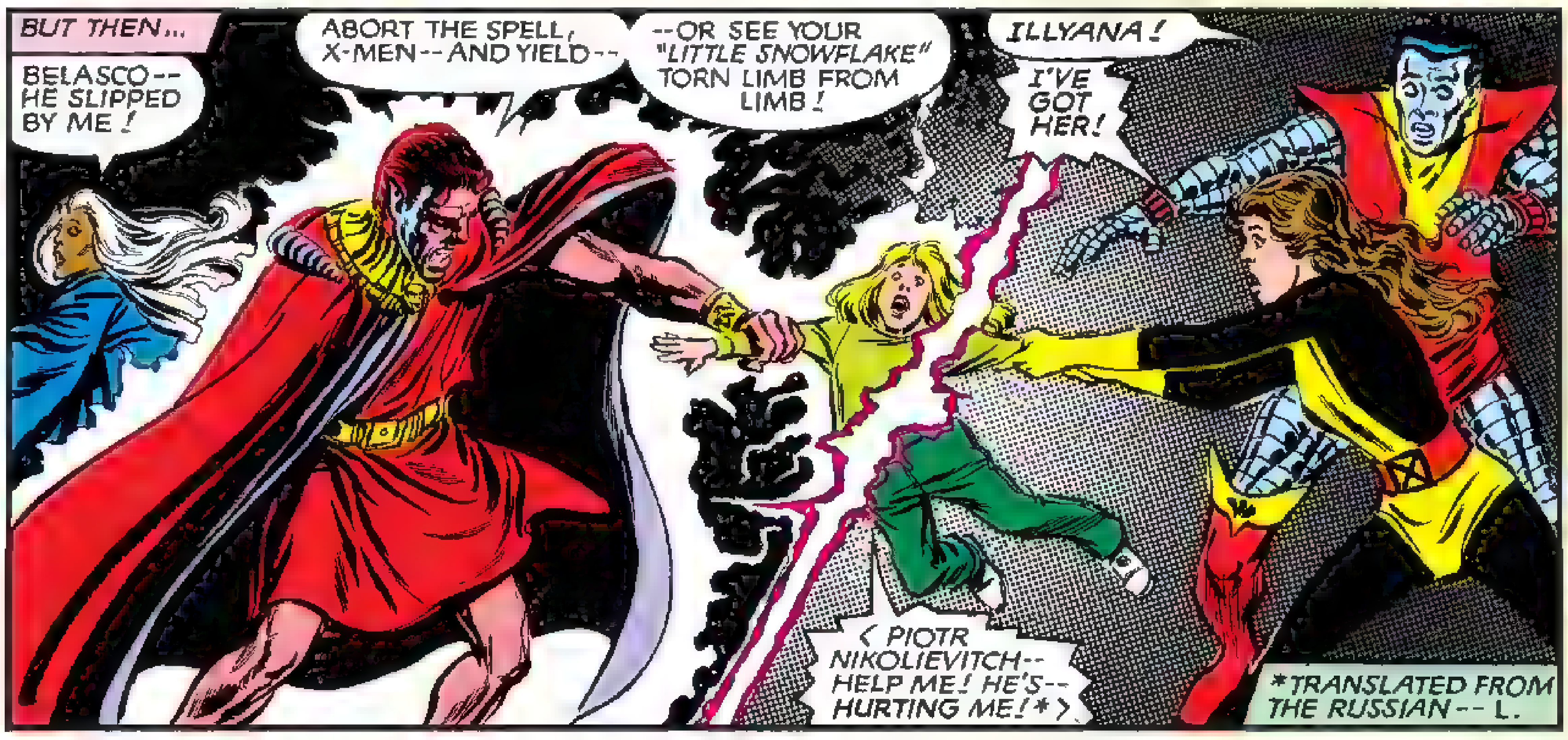

WELCOME, CHILD.
MY NAME IS... BELASCO.

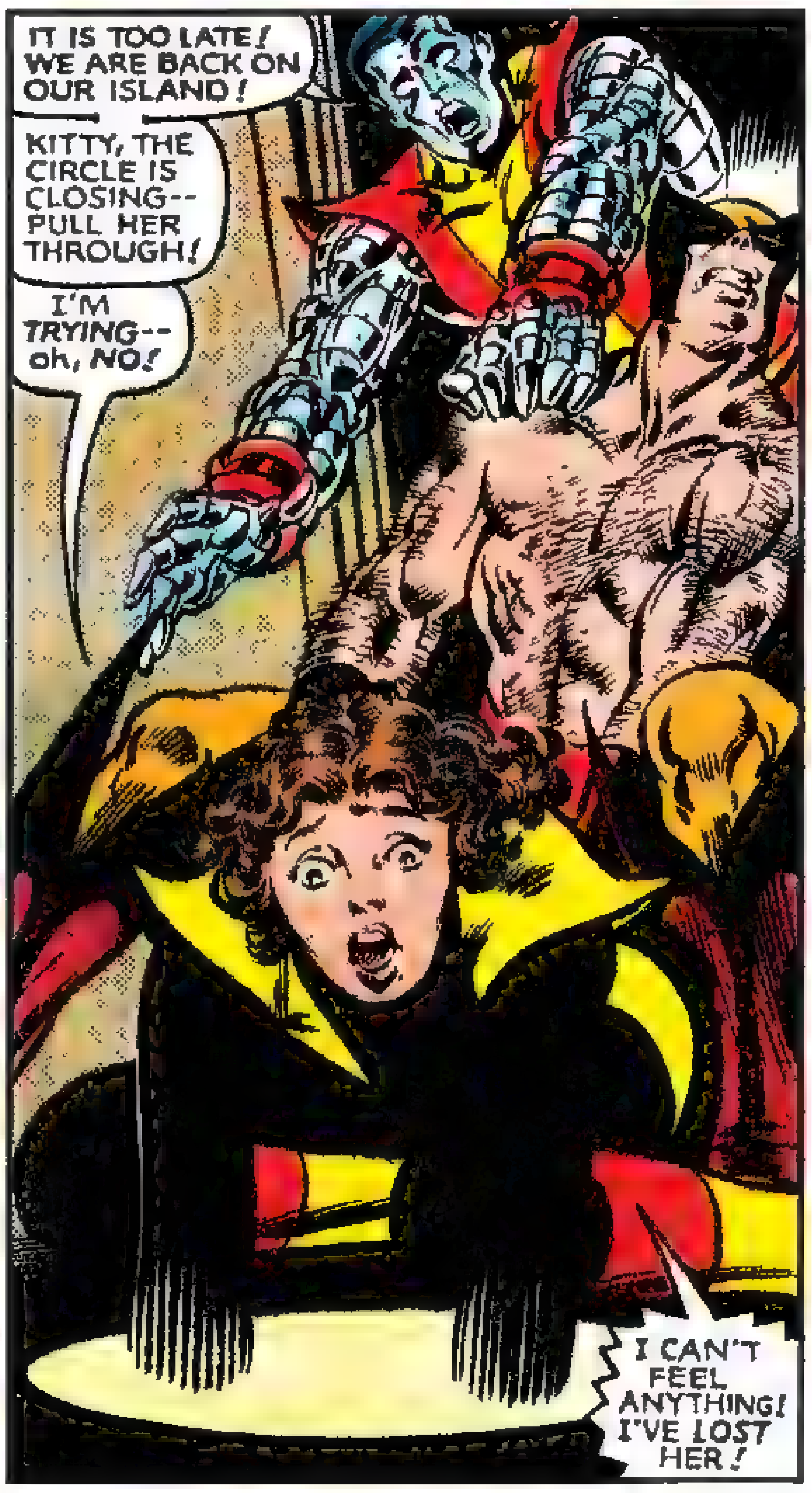
However, the X-Men soon moved their base to a strange island in the Bermuda Triangle ... an island, unfortunately for them, where the walls between Earth and Limbo were perilously thin. Our former master Belasco ruled Limbo then, and he saw an opportunity to serve the Elder Gods.

X-INFERNUS SAGA
Writer: **JEPH YORK**
Editor: **ALEX STARBUCK**
Design: **RODOLFO MURAGUCHI**

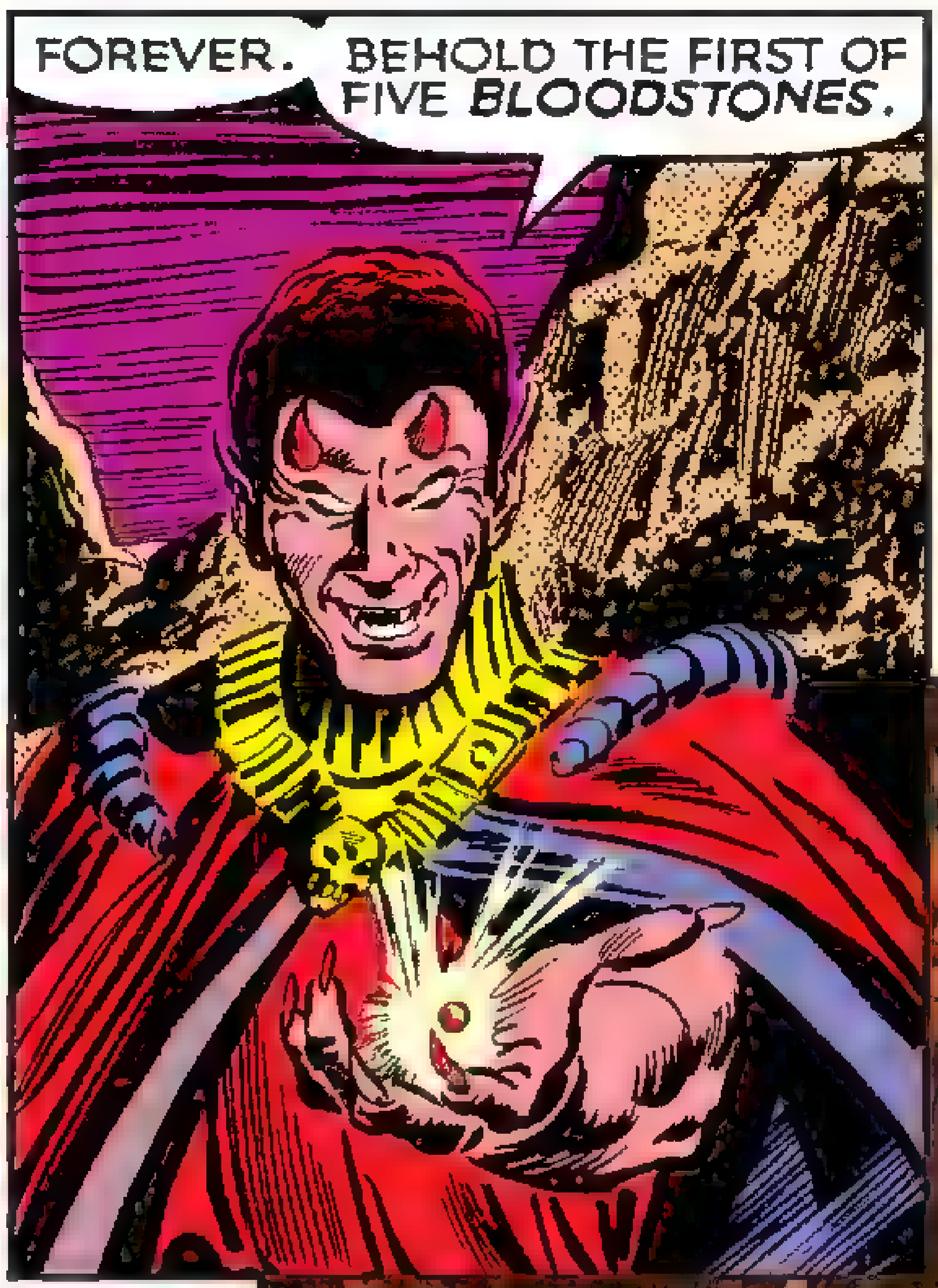


Reaching out with Limbo's magical stepping discs, he brought the X-Men here – where he gave young, innocent Illyana an empty medallion, and promised her a grand and glorious destiny.

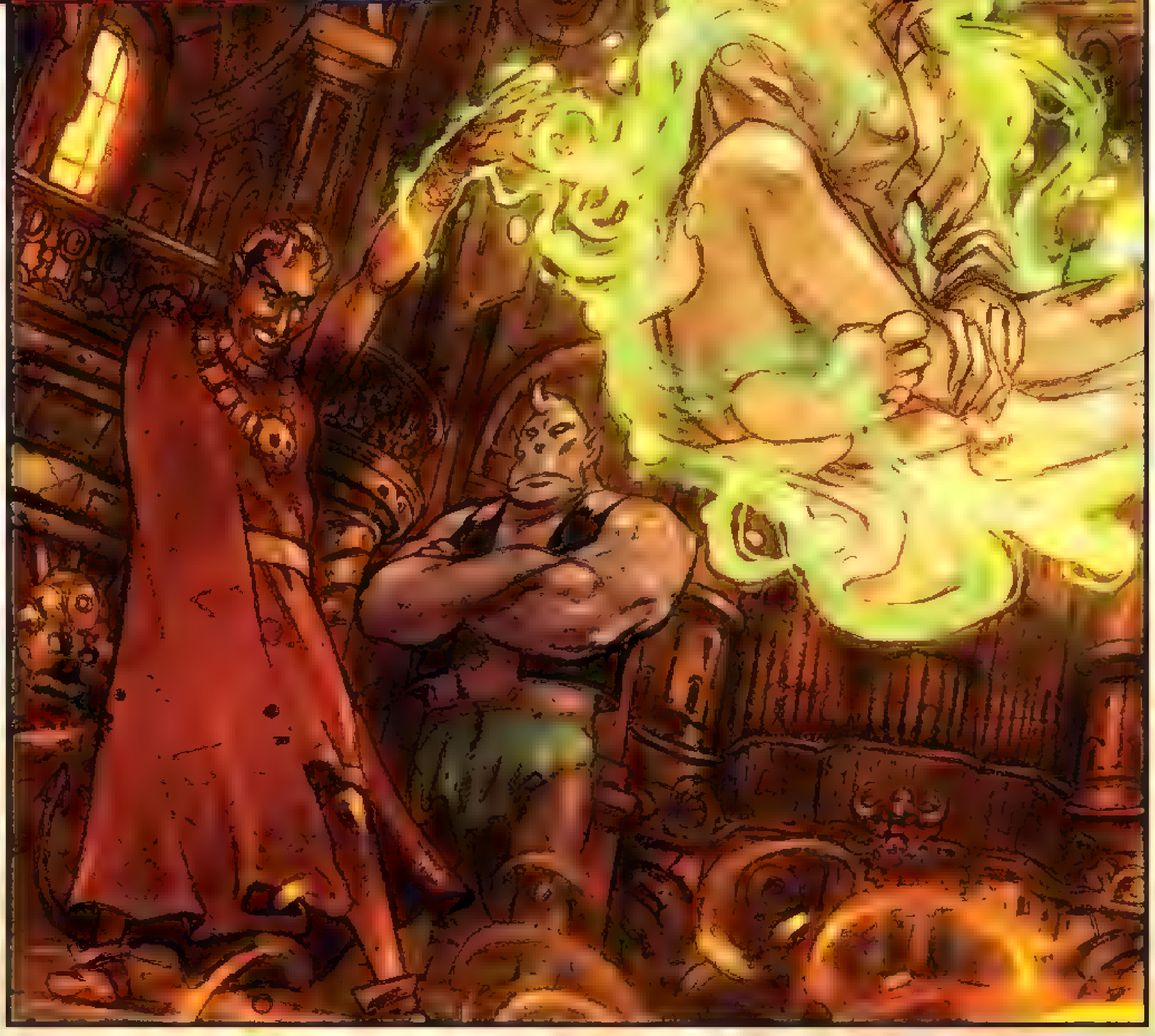

BUT THEN...
BELASCO-- HE SLIPPED BY ME!
ABORT THE SPELL, X-MEN--AND YIELD--
--OR SEE YOUR "LITTLE SNOWFLAKE" TORN LIMB FROM LIMB!
ILLYANA!
I'VE GOT HER!
< PIOTR NIKOLIEVITCH-- HELP ME! HE'S-- HURTING ME!*>
*TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN -- L.


IT IS TOO LATE! WE ARE BACK ON OUR ISLAND!
KITTY, THE CIRCLE IS CLOSING-- PULL HER THROUGH!
I'M TRYING-- oh, NO!
I CAN'T FEEL ANYTHING! I'VE LOST HER!

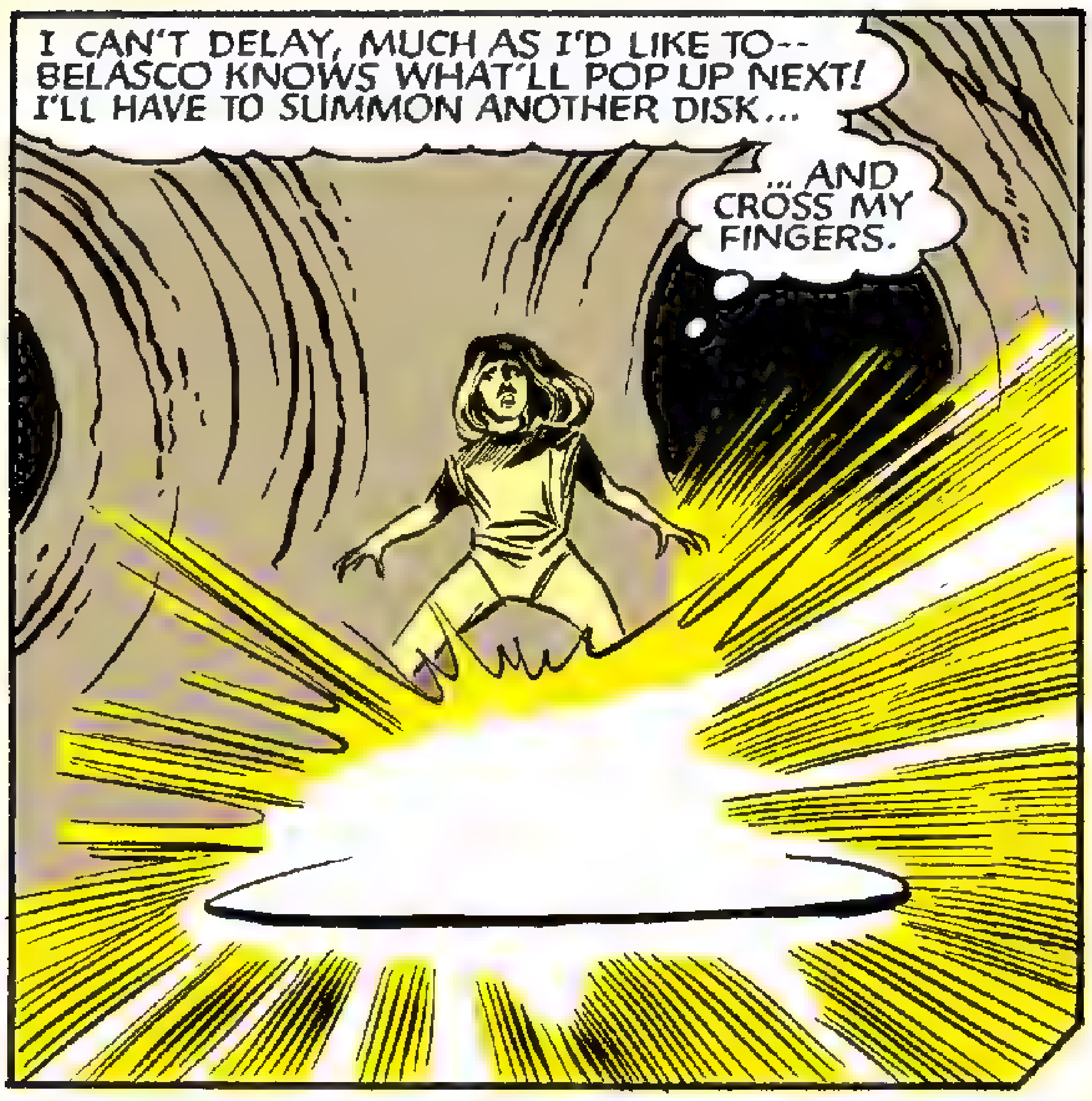
The X-Men fought back and escaped – but while returning to earth, they lost their grip on Illyana for a split-second. It was enough for Belasco to pull the girl back to Limbo and seal the stepping disc ... and trap Illyana in Limbo.


FOREVER.
BEHOLD THE FIRST OF FIVE BLOODSTONES.

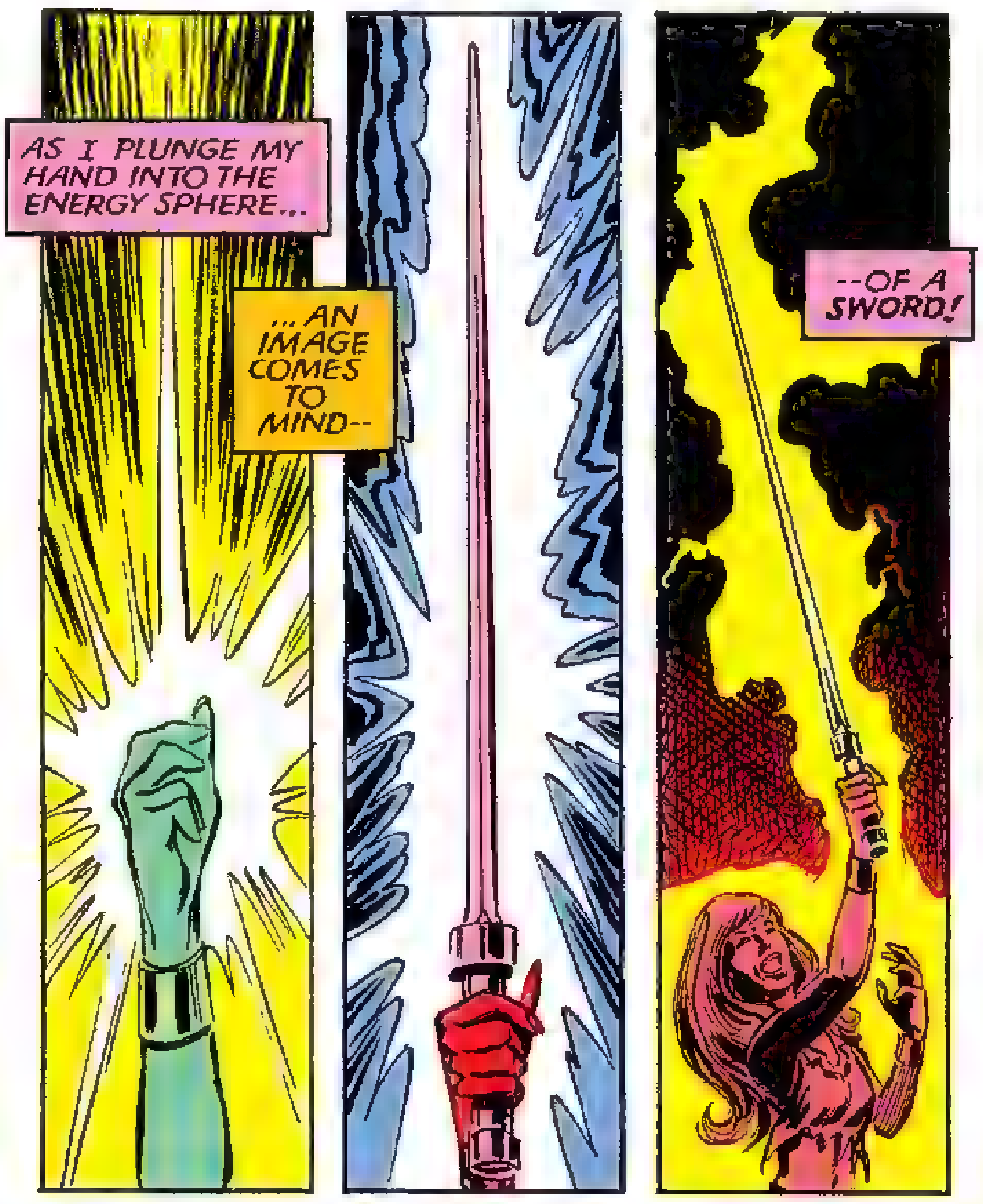
Belasco, seeing Illyana as pure and unspoiled, hoped to corrupt her, and create five bloodstones out of portions of her soul ... thereby allowing his masters, the Elder Gods, to enter our reality.



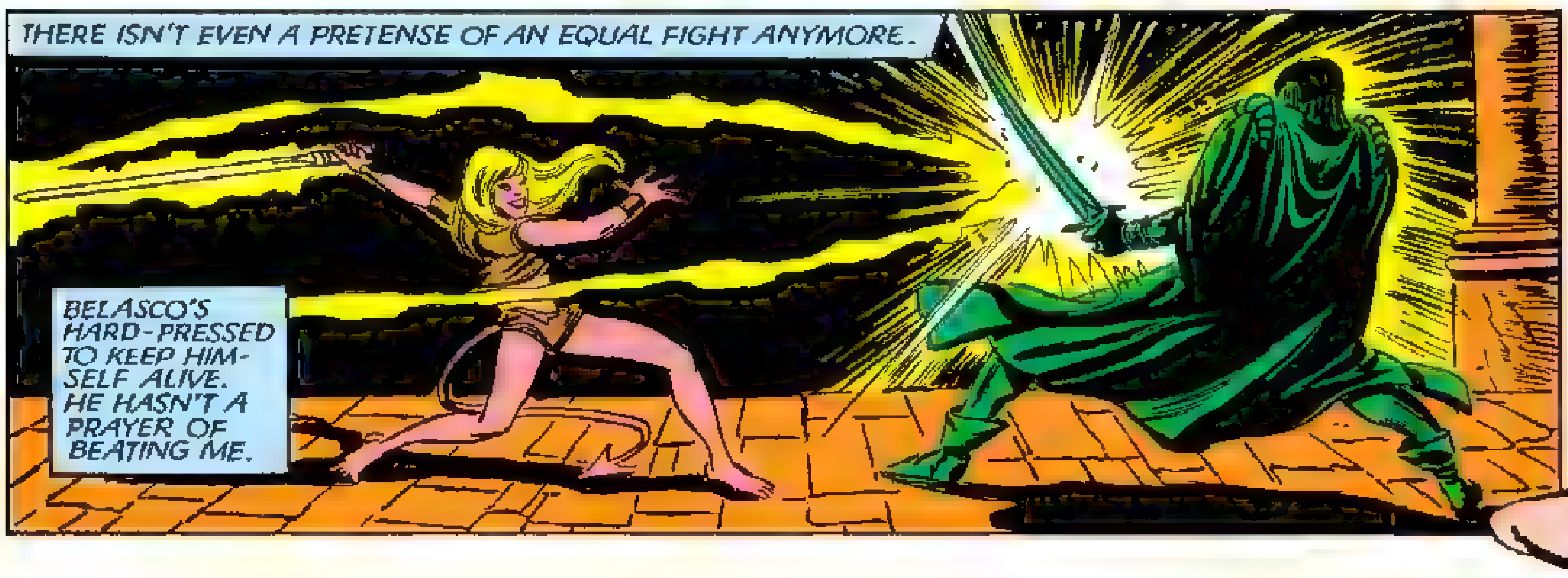
Illyana eventually became Belasco's apprentice, where she learned the black arts as he slowly subverted her soul. Part of her despised Belasco, and yearned for freedom – but another part, small at first but growing stronger every day, thrilled at the dark power she was amassing ... and the dark creature she was becoming.

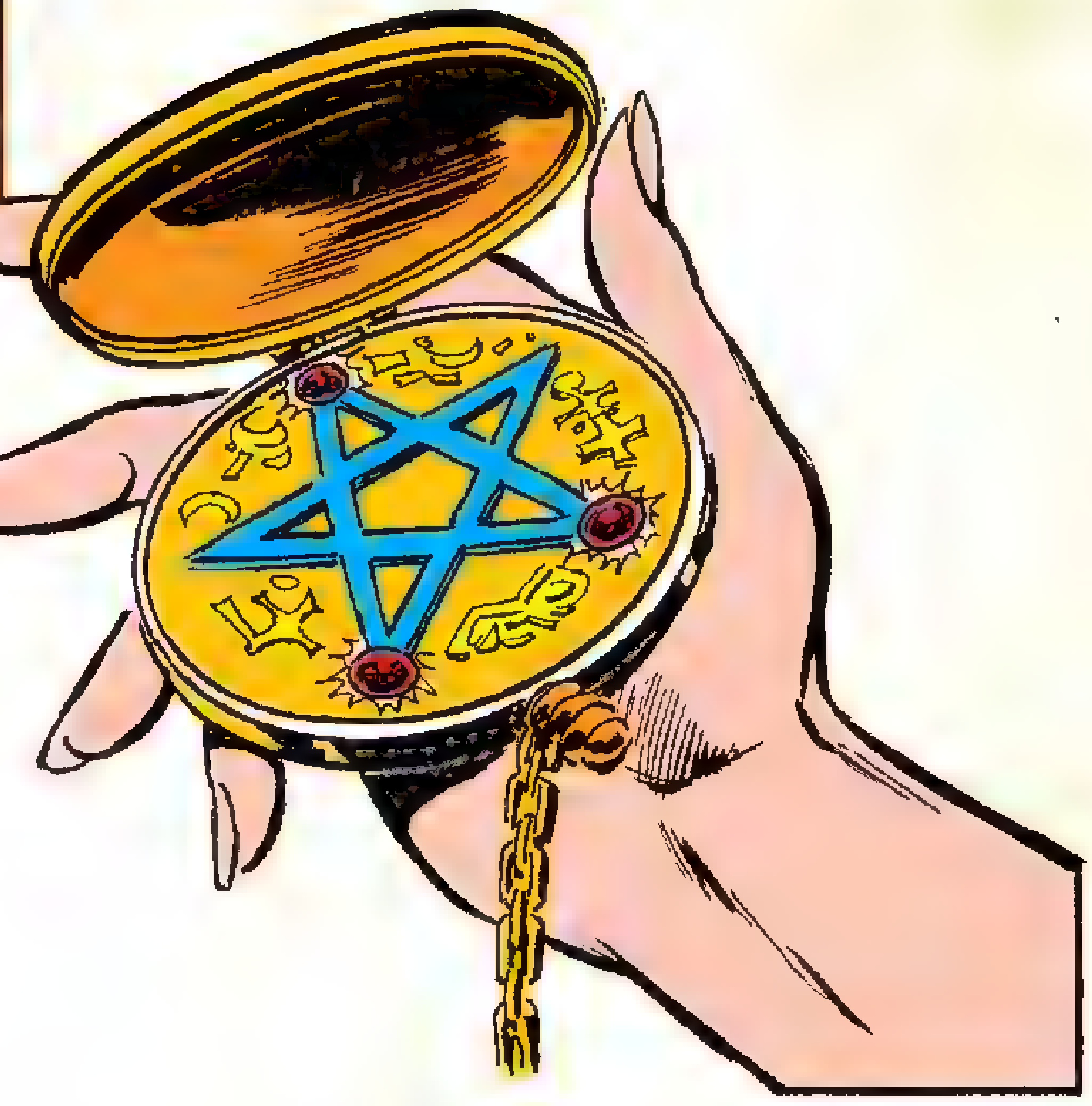

I CAN'T DELAY, MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO-- BELASCO KNOWS WHAT'LL POP UP NEXT! I'LL HAVE TO SUMMON ANOTHER DISK...
... AND CROSS MY FINGERS.

As Illyana grew into a teenager, her mutant powers blossomed, and she discovered that she could control Limbo's stepping discs, using them to teleport. And during one harsh Limbo winter, Illyana used all the magic she had been taught to forge a mighty weapon from a shard of her blackened soul – the Soulsword.

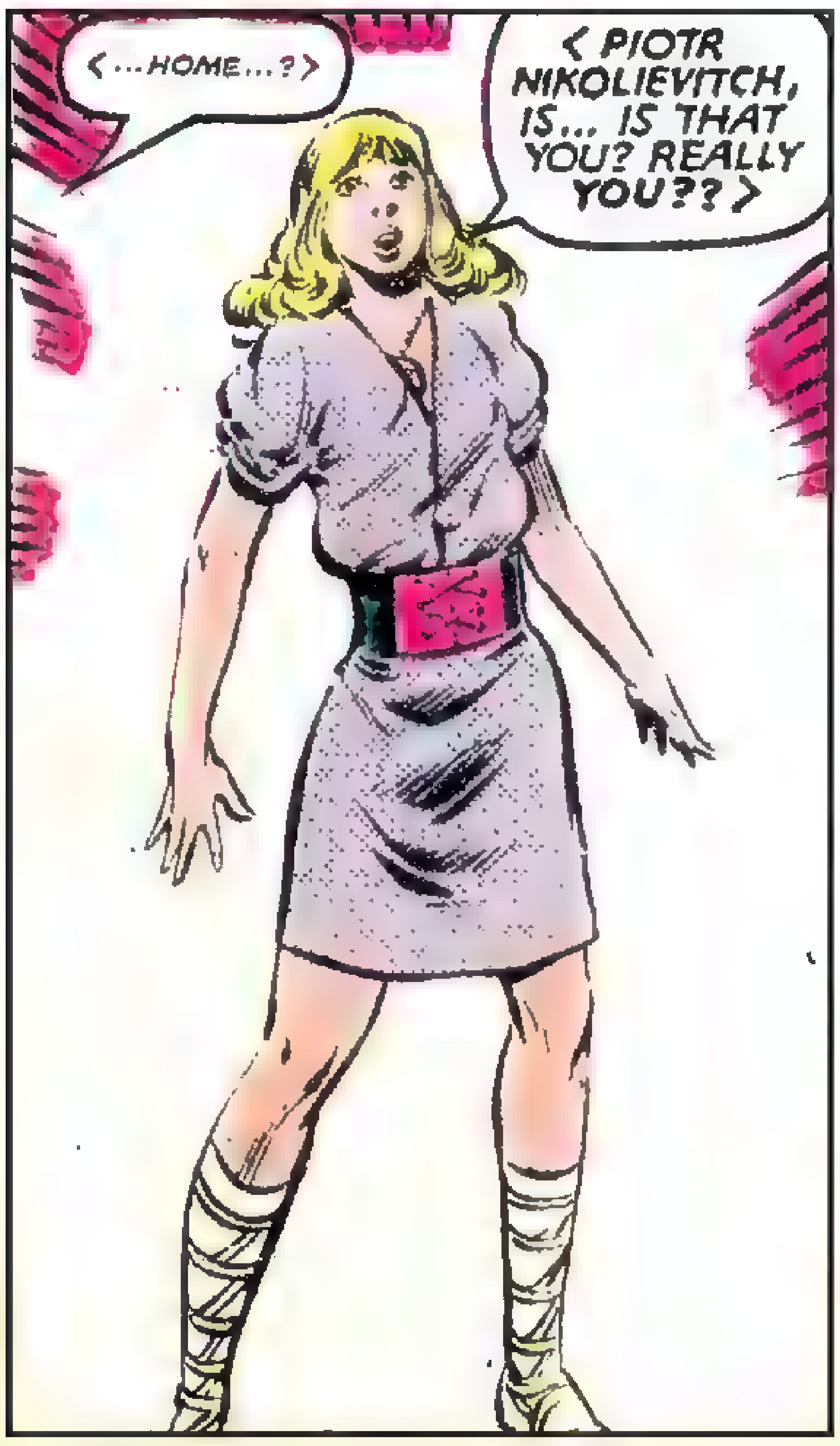

AS I PLUNGE MY HAND INTO THE ENERGY SPHERE...
... AN IMAGE COMES TO MIND--
--OF A SWORD!

With the Soulsword, Illyana defeated Belasco and became the ruler of Limbo. She then conjured up a stepping disc to return home – which, thanks to Limbo existing outside of time, opened on Earth at the exact same second that the X-Men had lost their grip on young Illyana.

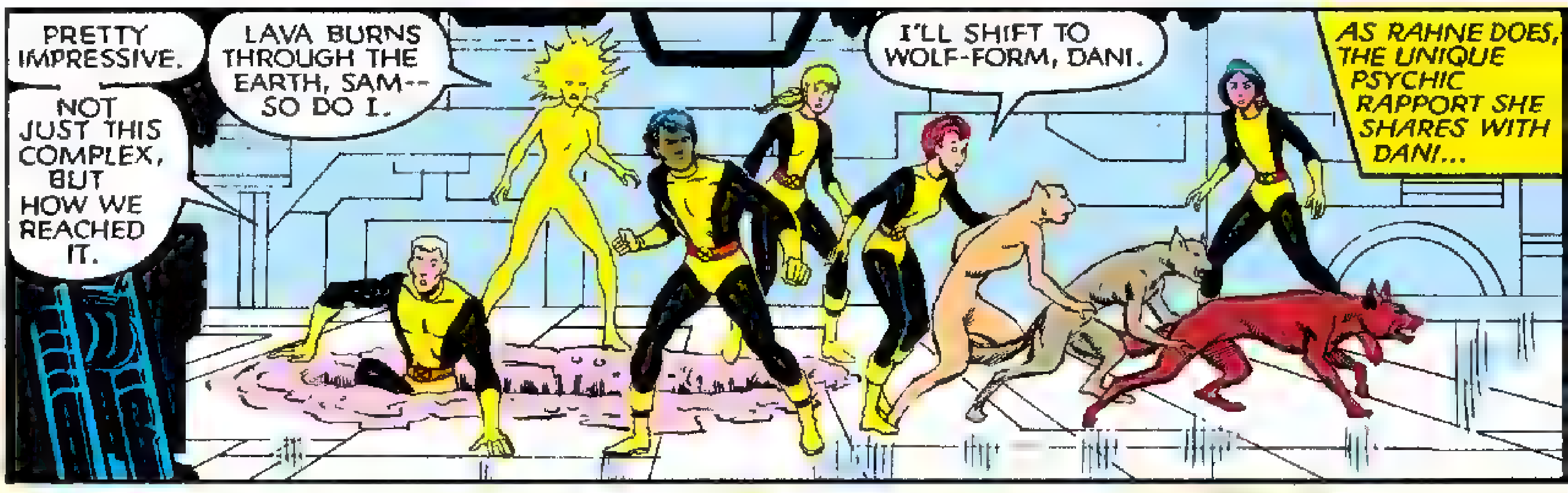

THERE ISN'T EVEN A PRETENSE OF AN EQUAL FIGHT ANYMORE.
BELASCO'S HARD-PRESSED TO KEEP HIMSELF ALIVE. HE HASN'T A PRAYER OF BEATING ME.



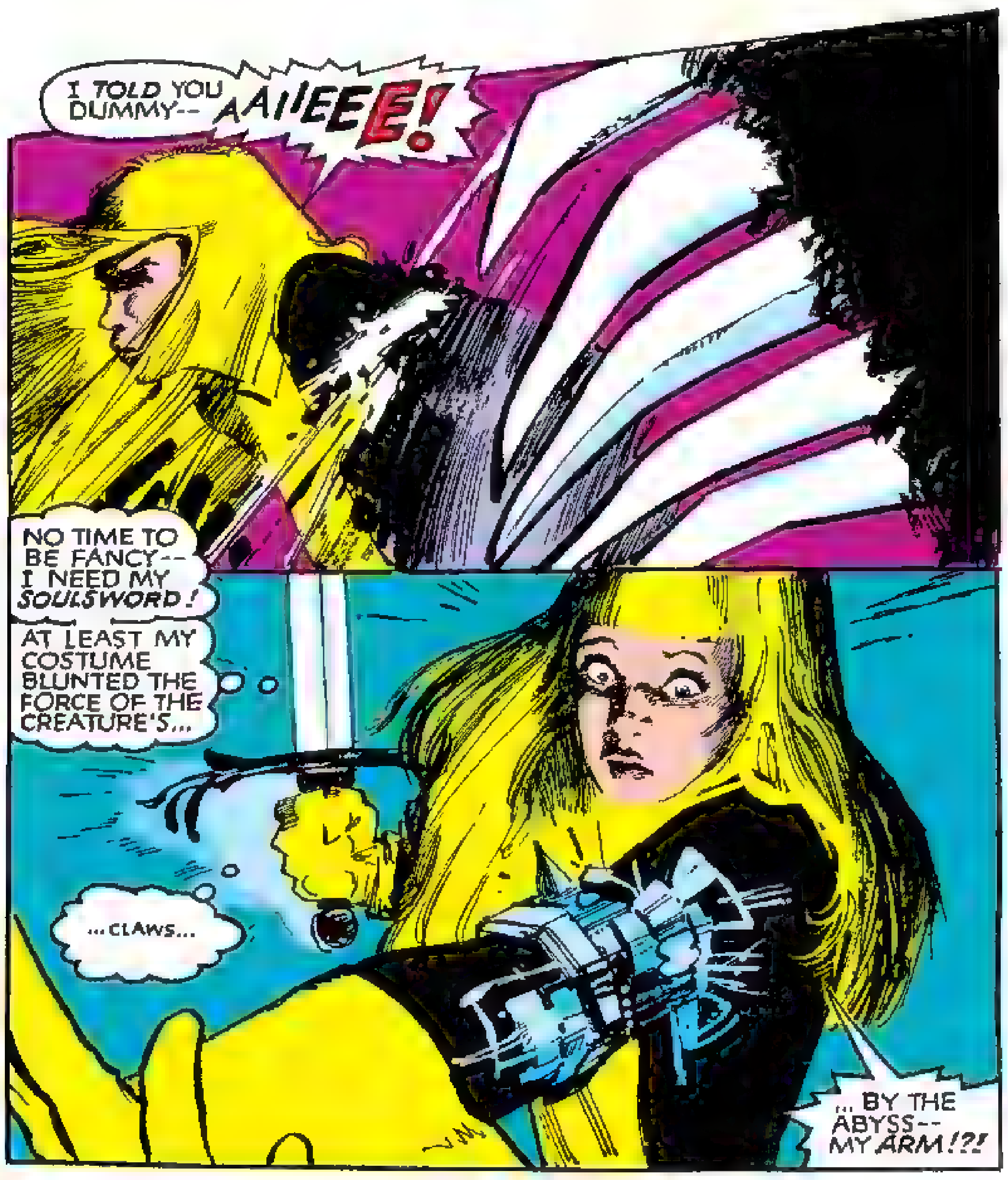
For the X-Men, no time had passed, but Illyana was suddenly seven years older – and forever changed. "Young, innocent Illyana" was now a demon sorceress, and the medallion she carried shone brightly with three of the five bloodstones...

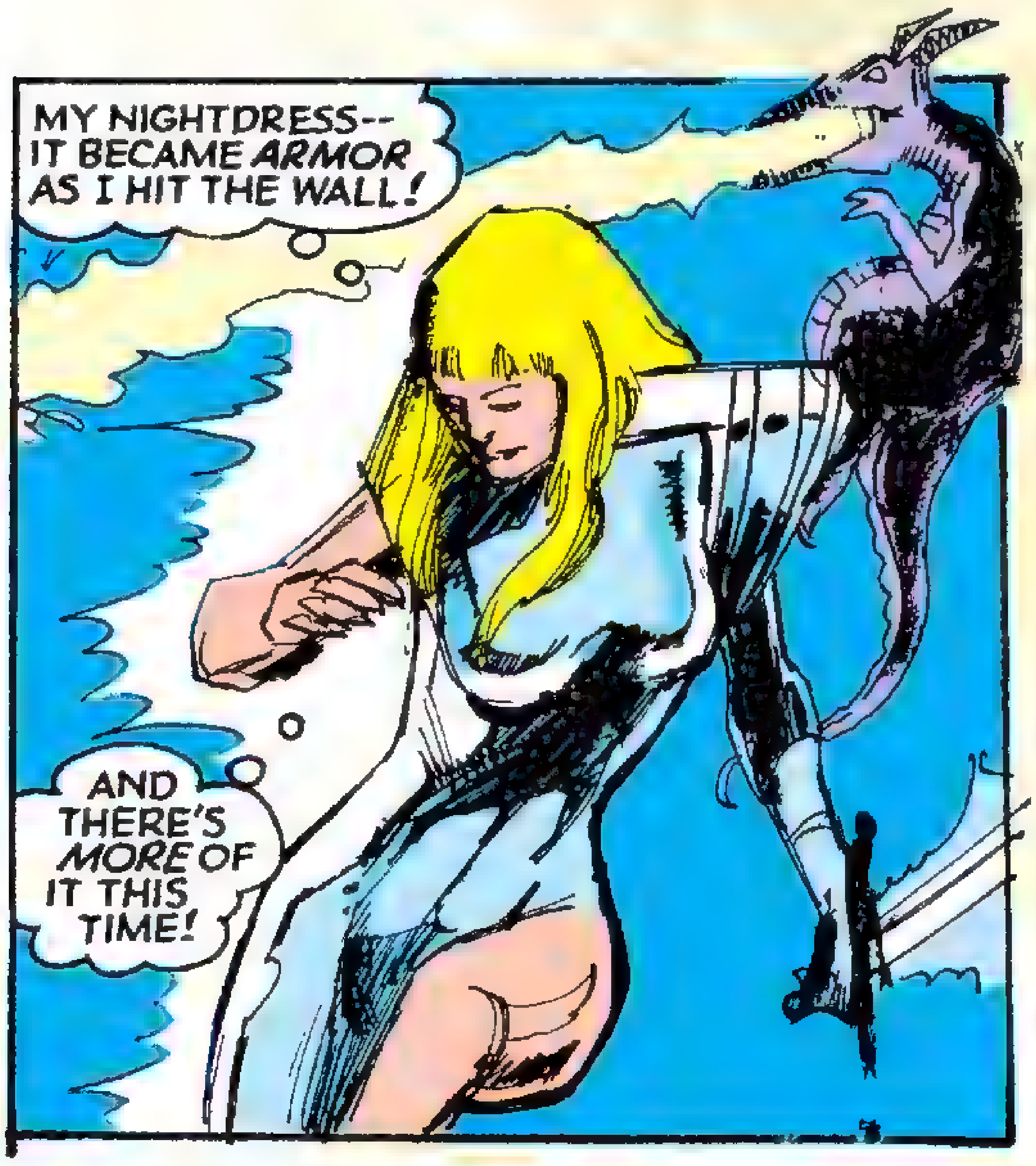

< ...HOME...? >
< PIOTR NIKOLIEVITCH, IS... IS THAT YOU? REALLY YOU?? >

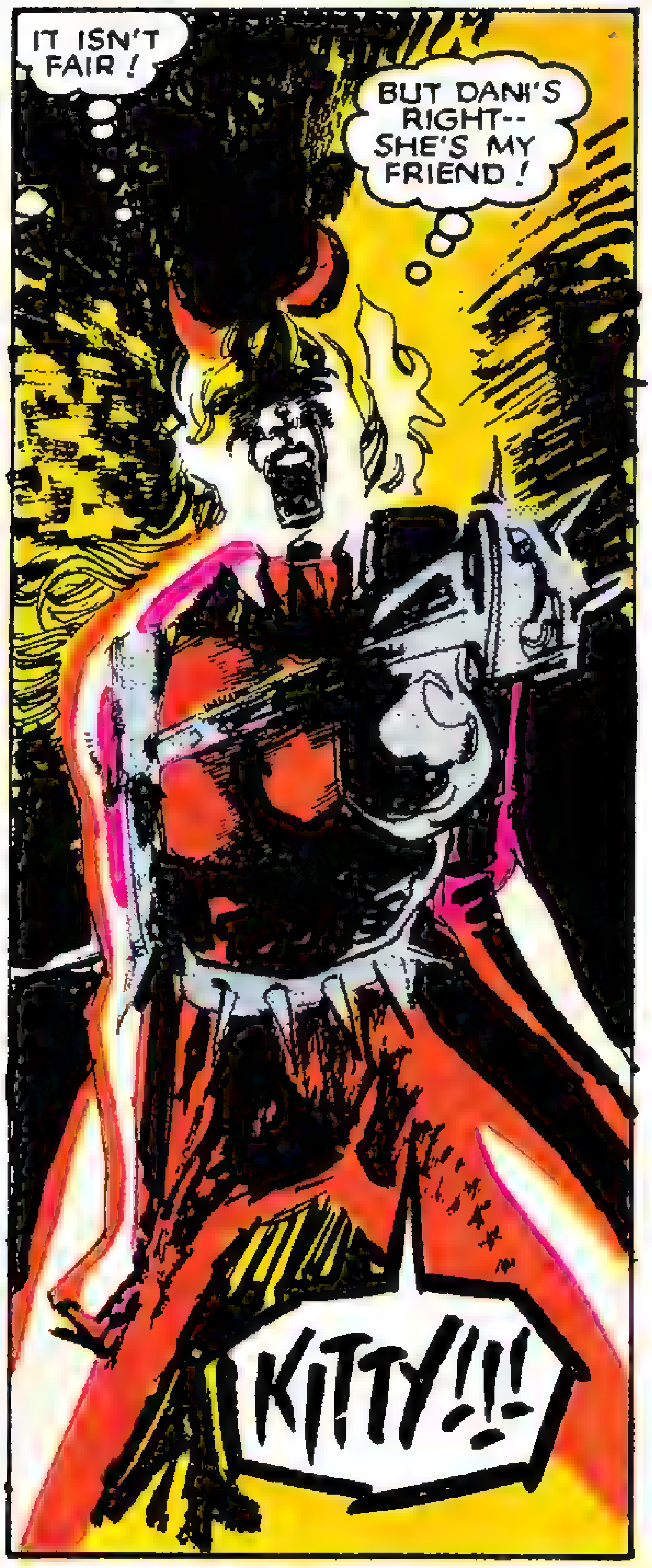
Illyana found that although her magic was extremely limited on Earth, she could still summon her Soulsword, and could also use Limbo's stepping discs to teleport and time-travel. Eventually she joined the New Mutants, Xavier's training squad, and took the name "Magik."


PRETTY IMPRESSIVE.
NOT JUST THIS COMPLEX, BUT HOW WE REACHED IT.
LAVA BURNS THROUGH THE EARTH, SAM-- SO DO I.
I'LL SHIFT TO WOLF-FORM, DANI.
AS RAHNE DOES, THE UNIQUE PSYCHIC RAPPORT SHE SHARES WITH DANI...

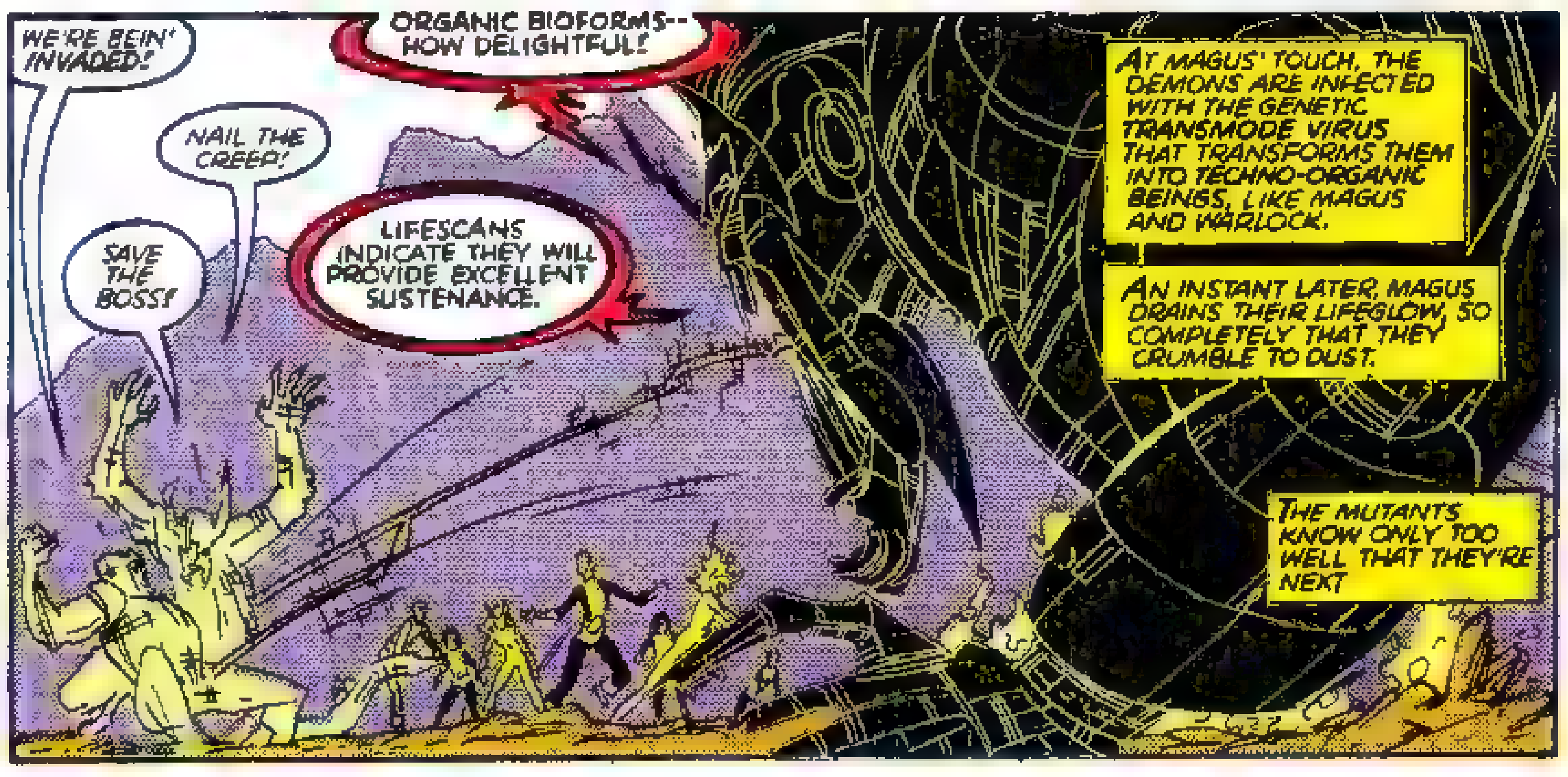
During a battle with a magical Demon Bear, Illyana was injured – and was surprised to see her wound immediately covered with glittering magical armor! Over time, this armor grew, slowly covering more of her body every time Illyana summoned her Soulsword ... a sleek, gleaming counterpoint to the corruption that grew within her soul the longer she practiced black magic.


I TOLD YOU DUMMY-- AAIIEEE!
NO TIME TO BE FANCY-- I NEED MY SOULSWORD!
AT LEAST MY COSTUME BLUNTED THE FORCE OF THE CREATURE'S...
...CLAWS...
... BY THE ABYSS-- MY ARM!?!

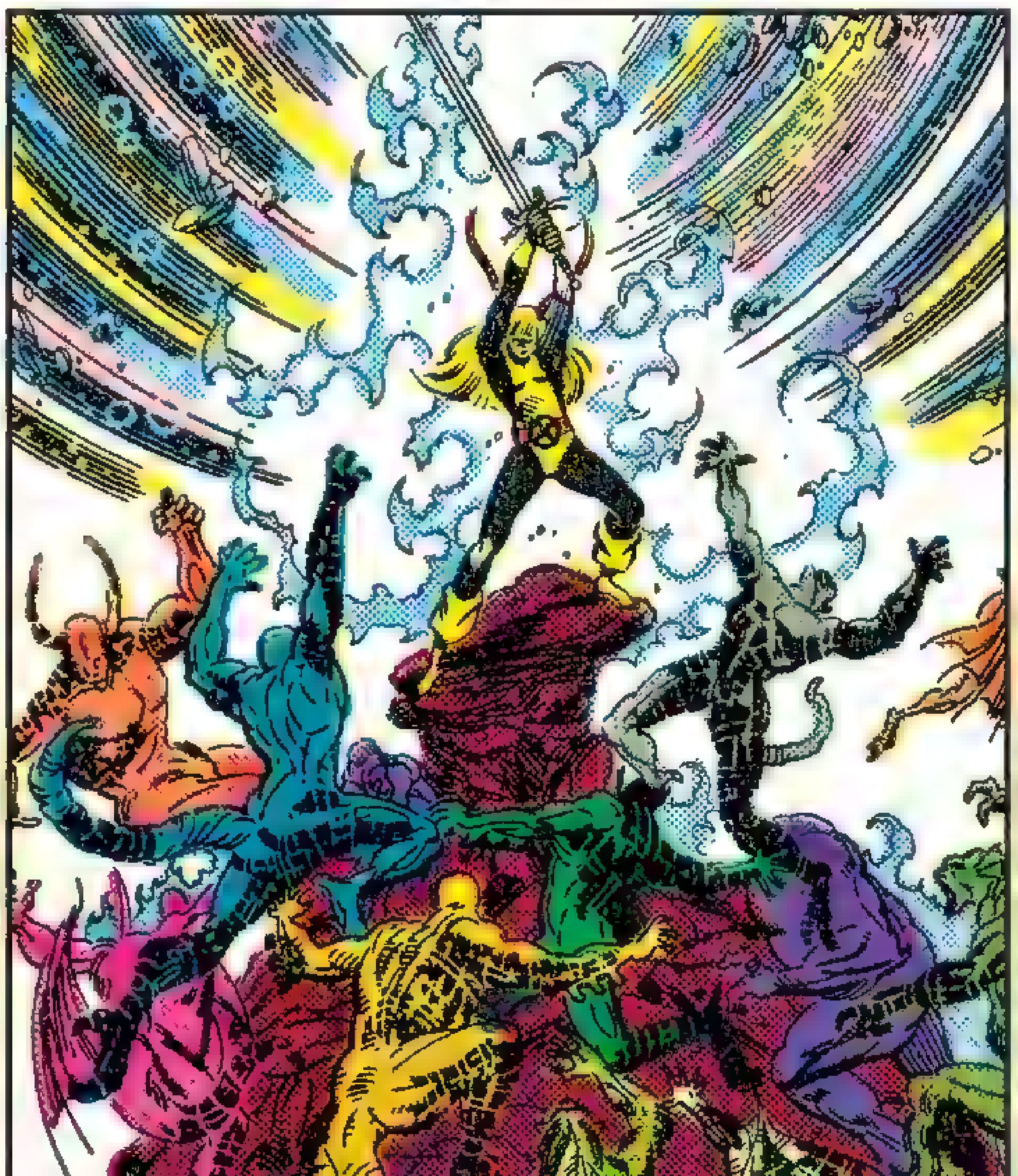

MY NIGHTDRESS-- IT BECAME ARMOR AS I HIT THE WALL!
AND THERE'S MORE OF IT THIS TIME!


IT ISN'T FAIR!
BUT DANI'S RIGHT-- SHE'S MY FRIEND!
KITTY!!!

Eventually Illyana's dark side also began manifesting in the flesh. Whenever she became enraged, or used powerful magic spells, she would transform into a cloven-hoofed, horned creature ... her evil side, the Darkchilde.

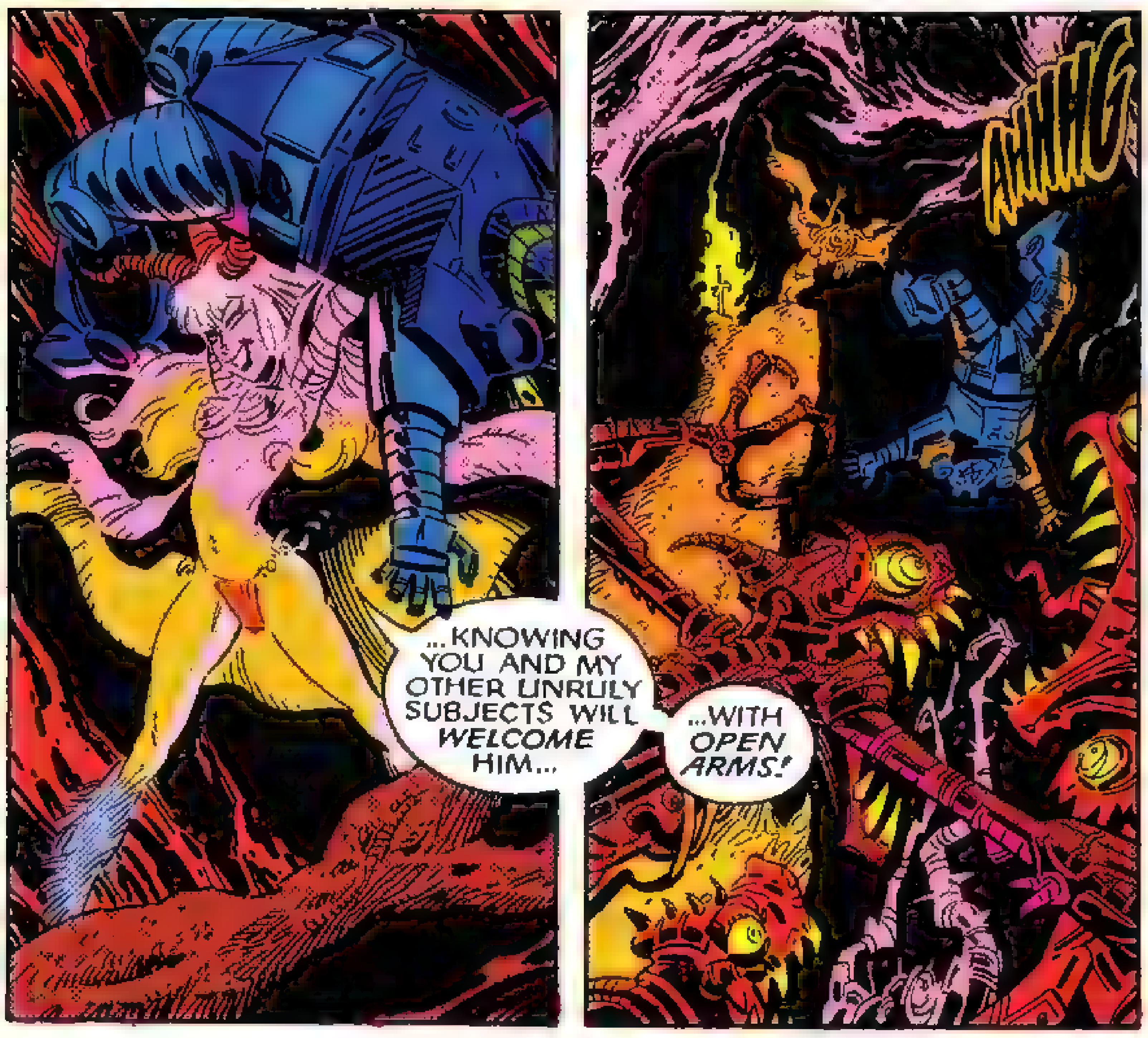

WE'RE BEIN' INVADED!
ORGANIC BIOFORMS-- HOW DELIGHTFUL!
NAIL THE CREEP!
SAVE THE BOSS!
LIFESCANS INDICATE THEY WILL PROVIDE EXCELLENT SUSTENANCE.
AT MAGUS' TOUCH, THE DEMONS ARE INFECTED WITH THE GENETIC TRANSMODE VIRUS THAT TRANSFORMS THEM INTO TECHNO-ORGANIC BEINGS, LIKE MAGUS AND WARLOCK.
AN INSTANT LATER, MAGUS DRAINS THEIR LIFEGLOW, SO COMPLETELY THAT THEY CRUMBLE TO DUST.
THE MUTANTS KNOW ONLY TOO WELL THAT THEY'RE NEXT

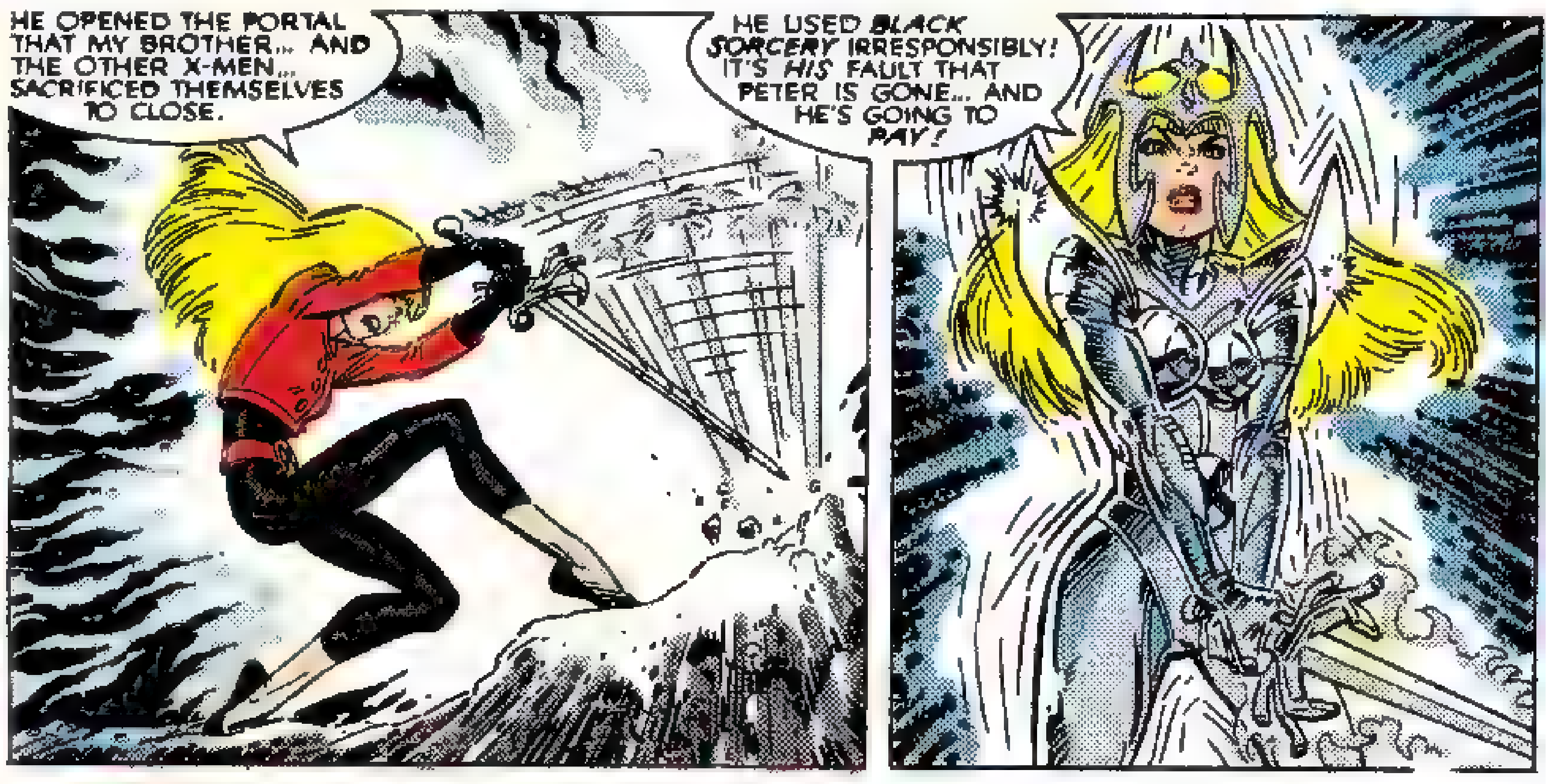
When the New Mutants fought the Magus, a member of the alien Technarch race, Illyana teleported her team to Limbo – but the Magus followed. The New Mutants fled again, but the Magus remained behind, and made a deal with Illyana's treacherous second-in-command, S'ym.



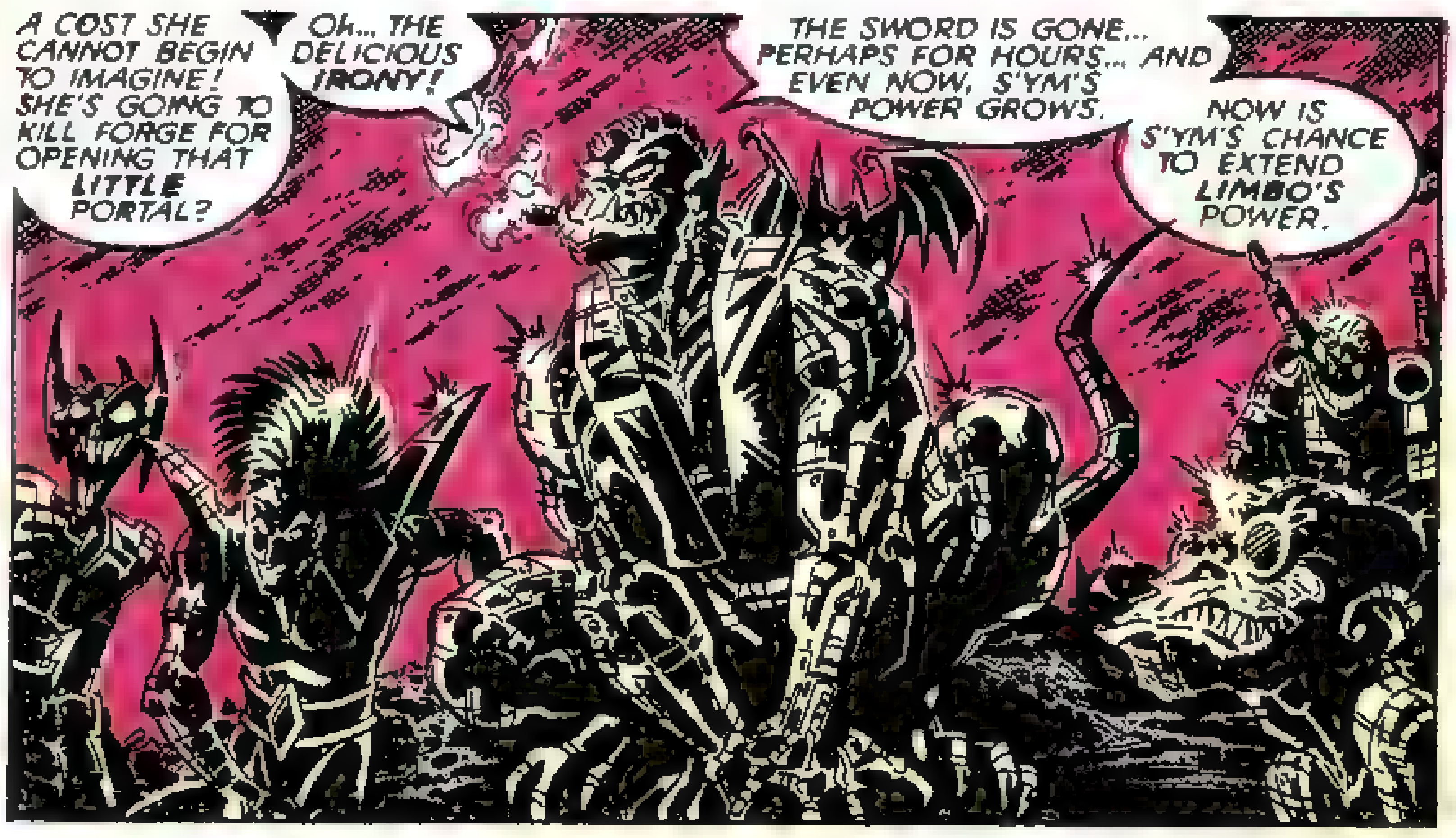
The alien's touch converted S'ym into a techno-organic creature as well ... and although Illyana and her teammates defeated the Magus, S'ym used his new power to start an uprising – transforming more demons into creatures like himself.

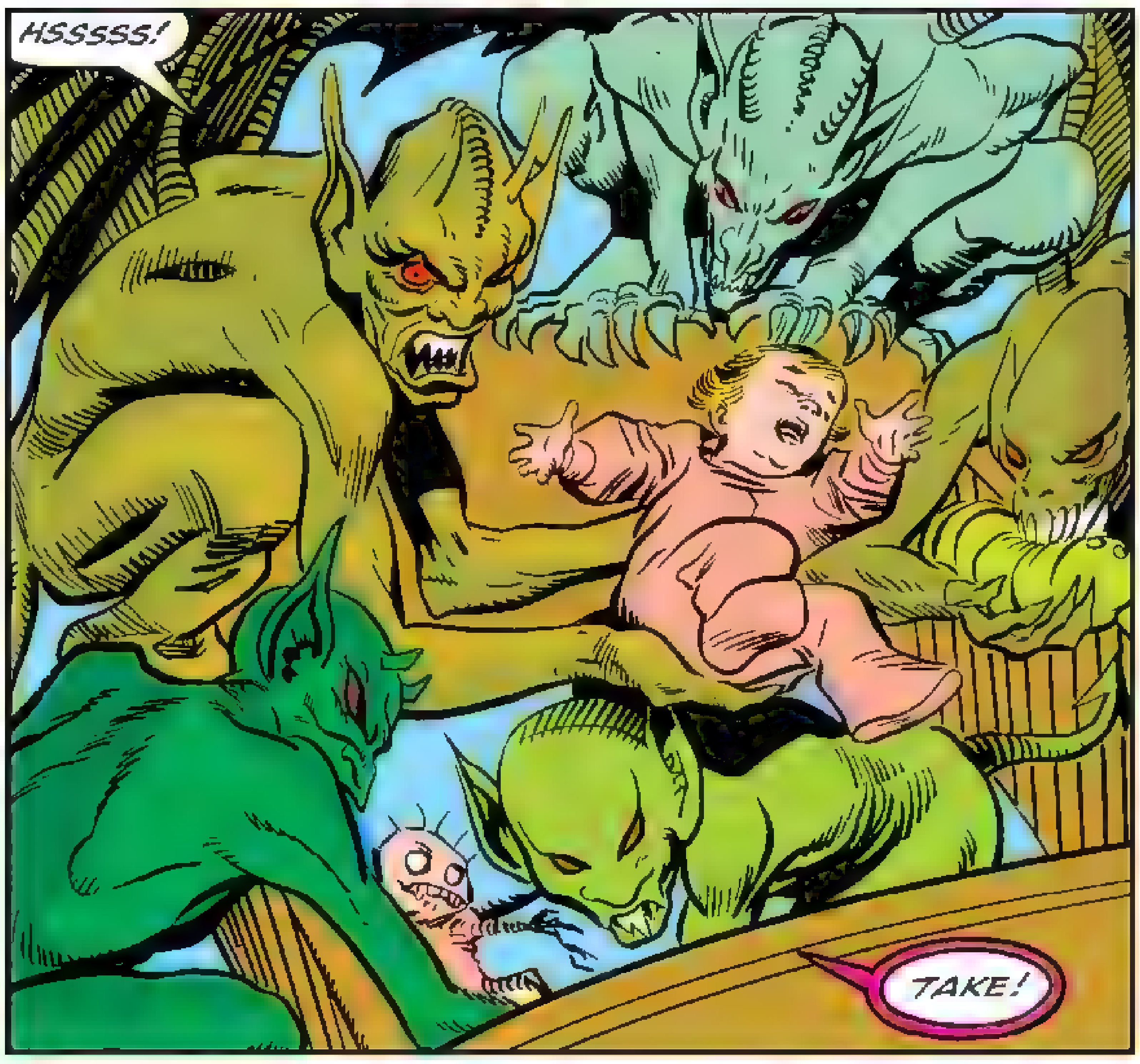
Illyana faced evil now within and without, and her Darkchilde aspect grew stronger. Even her simplest spells came out twisted and grotesque, and she became merciless and wicked in battle – often condemning her enemies to Limbo, where they were invariably transformed by S'ym and joined his army.


AAHHG
...KNOWING YOU AND MY OTHER UNRULY SUBJECTS WILL WELCOME HIM...
...WITH OPEN ARMS!


HE OPENED THE PORTAL THAT MY BROTHER... AND THE OTHER X-MEN... SACRIFICED THEMSELVES TO CLOSE.
HE USED BLACK SORCERY IRRESPONSIBLY! IT'S HIS FAULT THAT PETER IS GONE... AND HE'S GOING TO PAY!

Illyana realized that she had to keep the Soulsword sheathed in Limbo, buried in the ground, to keep S'ym's growing might at bay. Every time she was forced to draw it in battle, S'ym was able to grow more powerful, and he began to plot...

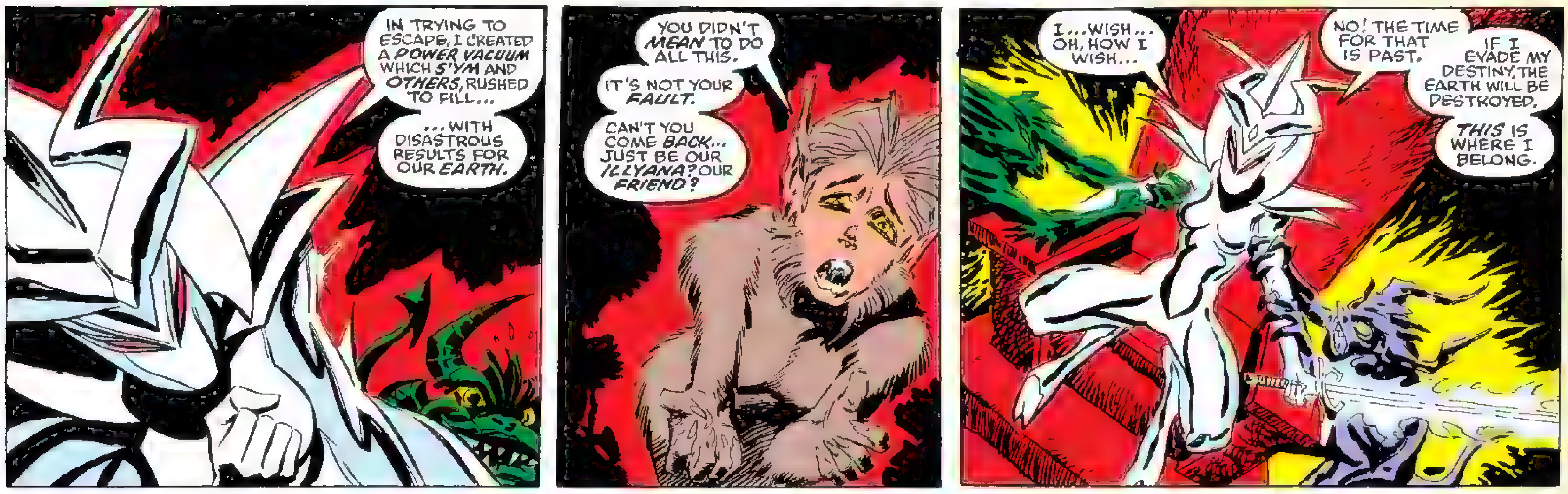

A COST SHE CANNOT BEGIN TO IMAGINE! SHE'S GOING TO KILL FORGE FOR OPENING THAT LITTLE PORTAL?
Oh... THE DELICIOUS IRONY!
THE SWORD IS GONE... PERHAPS FOR HOURS... AND EVEN NOW, S'YM'S POWER GROWS.
NOW IS S'YM'S CHANCE TO EXTEND LIMBO'S POWER.


HSSSSS!
TAKE!

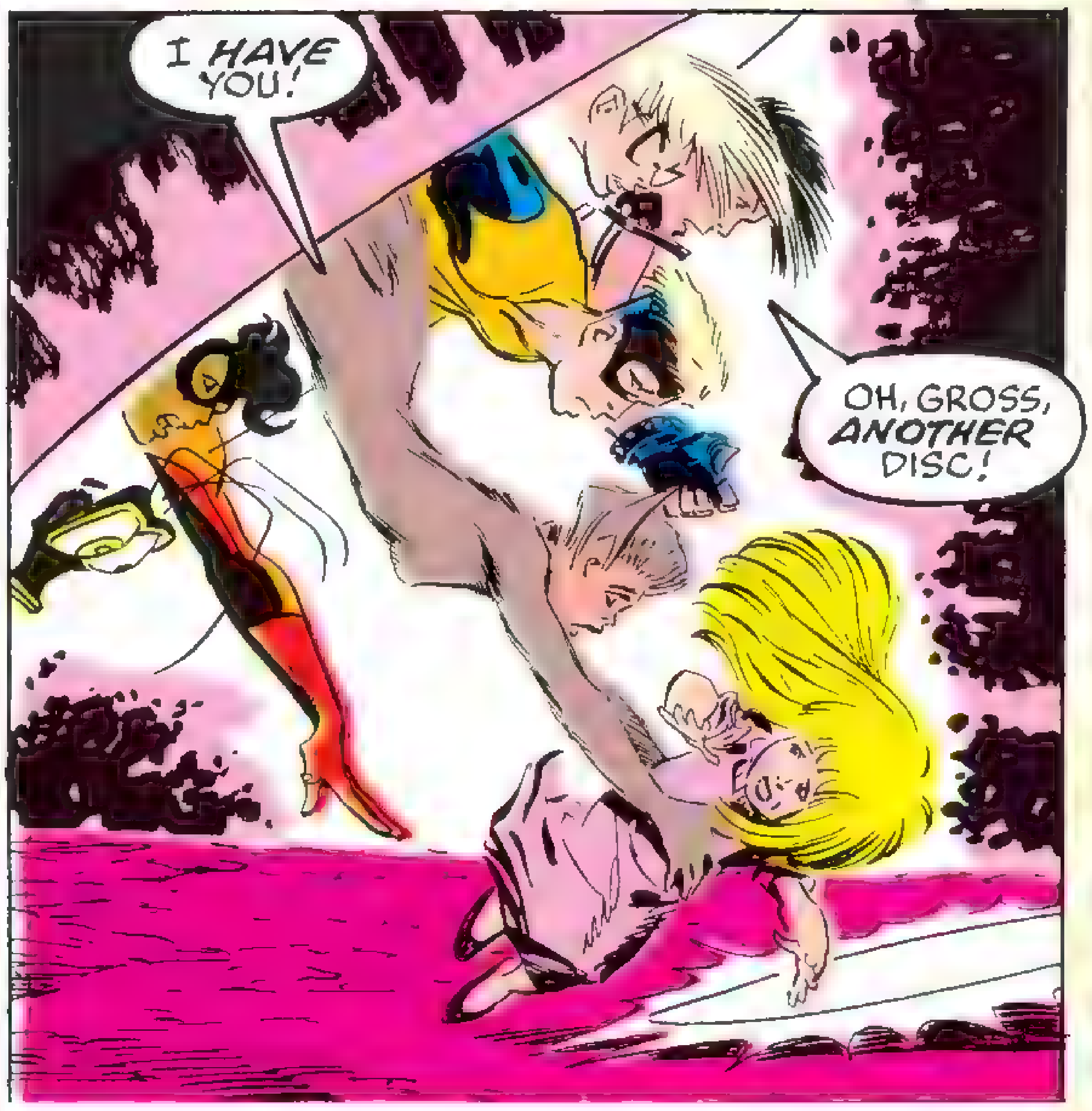
S'ym conspired with fellow demon lord N'astirh, who gathered thirteen mutant infants to cast a powerful spell. When all was ready, N'astirh tricked Illyana into opening a stepping disc to Earth – and Limbo's floodgates were torn wide open.

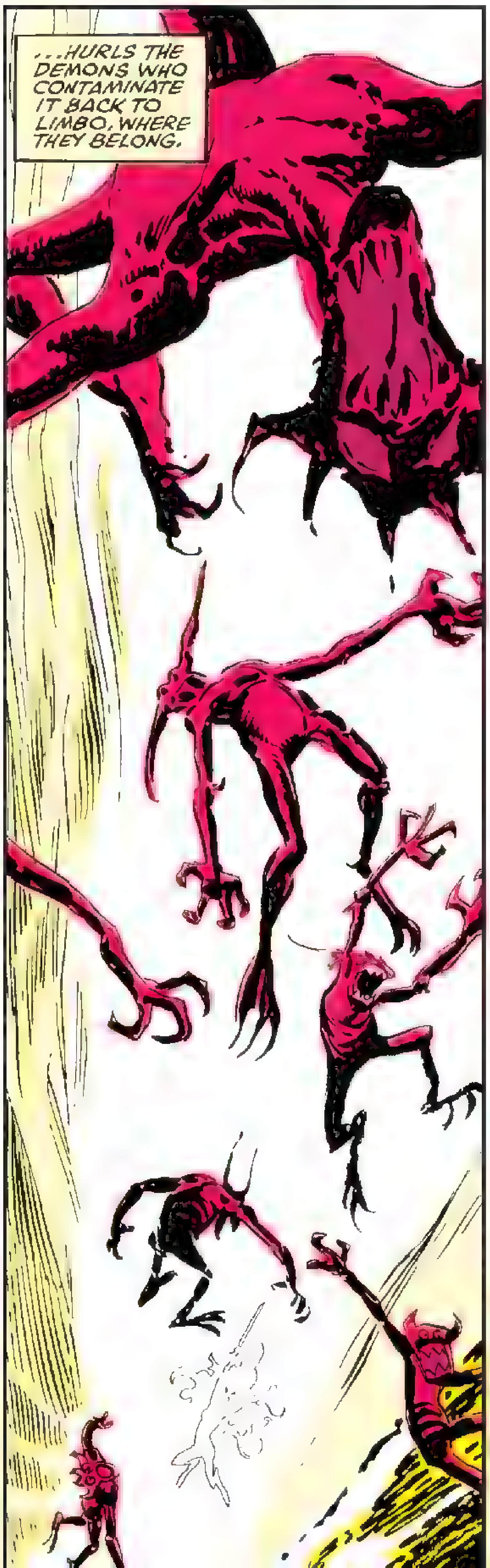
We demons were freed, and poured onto the Earth in ever-increasing numbers – an endless tide, transforming New York City into a nightmare, and corrupting its hapless population soul by soul.

Illyana, now almost completely transformed into the Darkchilde, knew only one way to stop us. She would have to willingly give herself over to the corruption within, lose her soul completely, and rule Limbo with an iron fist. But her teammates, who had been leaping through Limbo's twisted timeline via its stepping discs, and had witnessed Illyana's harsh upbringing, begged her to find another solution.

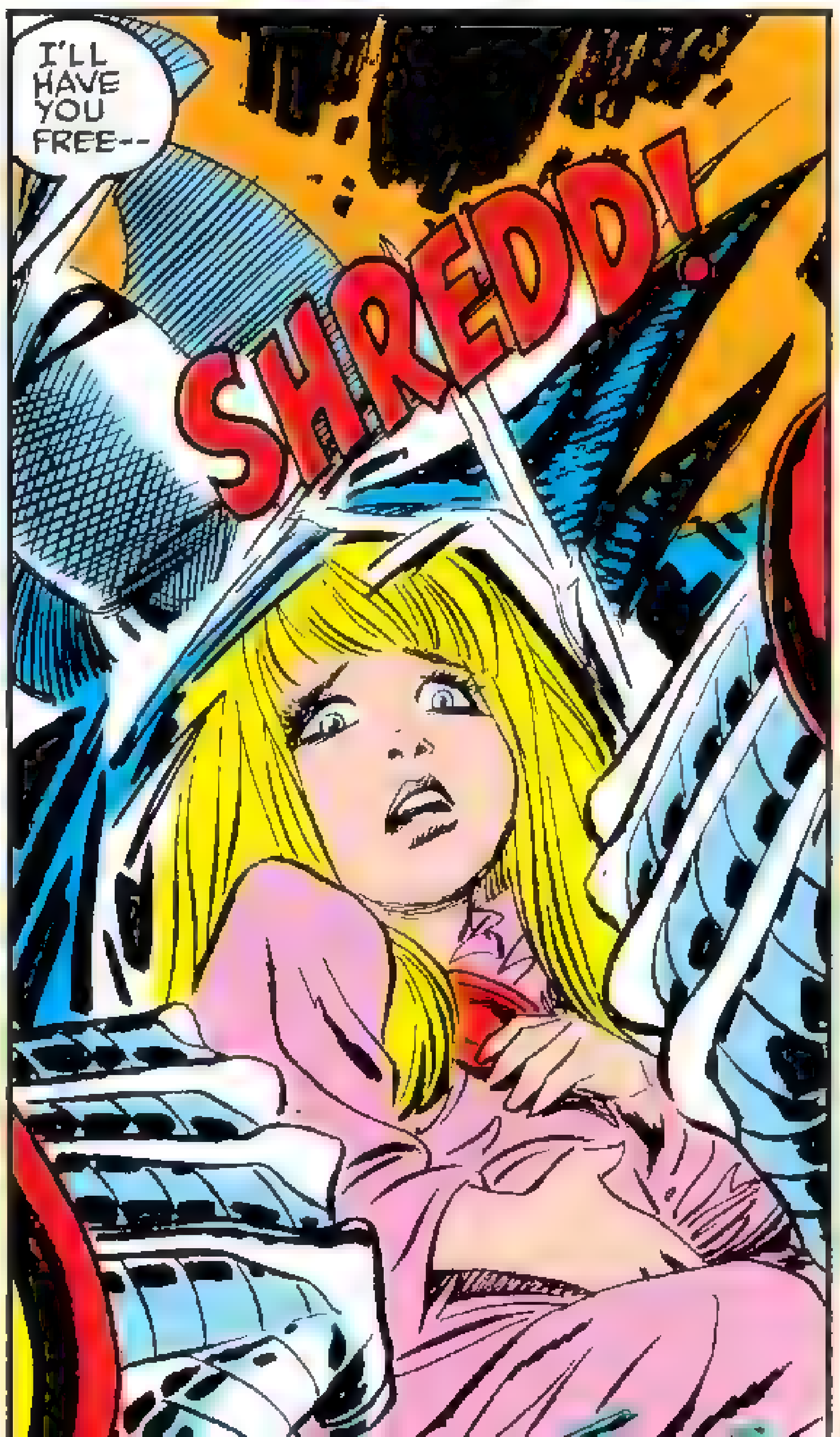

IN TRYING TO ESCAPE, I CREATED A *POWER VACUUM* WHICH *S'YM* AND *OTHERS*, RUSHED TO FILL...
...WITH DISASTROUS RESULTS FOR OUR *EARTH*.
YOU DIDN'T *MEAN* TO DO ALL THIS.
IT'S NOT YOUR *FAULT*.
CAN'T YOU COME *BACK*... JUST BE OUR *ILLYANA*? OUR *FRIEND*?
I...WISH... OH, HOW I WISH...
NO! THE TIME FOR THAT IS PAST.
IF I EVADE MY DESTINY, THE EARTH WILL BE DESTROYED.
THIS IS WHERE I BELONG.

In a last-ditch effort, the New Mutants attempted to alter the past, and grabbed the young Illyana through a stepping disc just as the teenaged Darkchilde struck on another solution – erasing herself from existence.


I *HAVE* YOU!
OH, GROSS, *ANOTHER* DISC!


...HURLS THE DEMONS WHO CONTAMINATE IT BACK TO LIMBO, WHERE THEY BELONG.

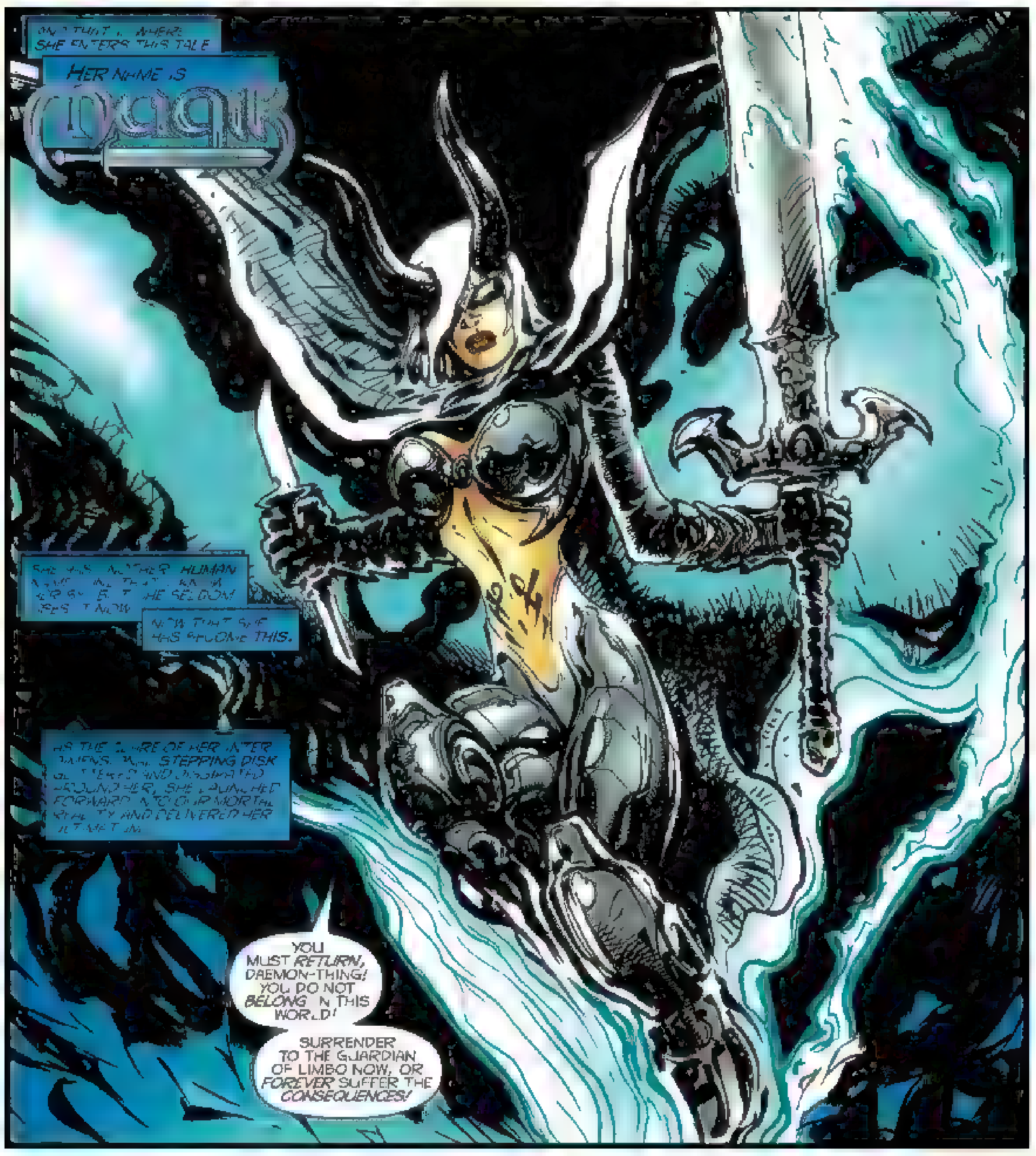
Combining her Soulsword, the stepping discs and her last ounce of energy, Illyana ended everything – creating a cyclone that sucked every demon back to Limbo and sealed the doors between dimensions for good.

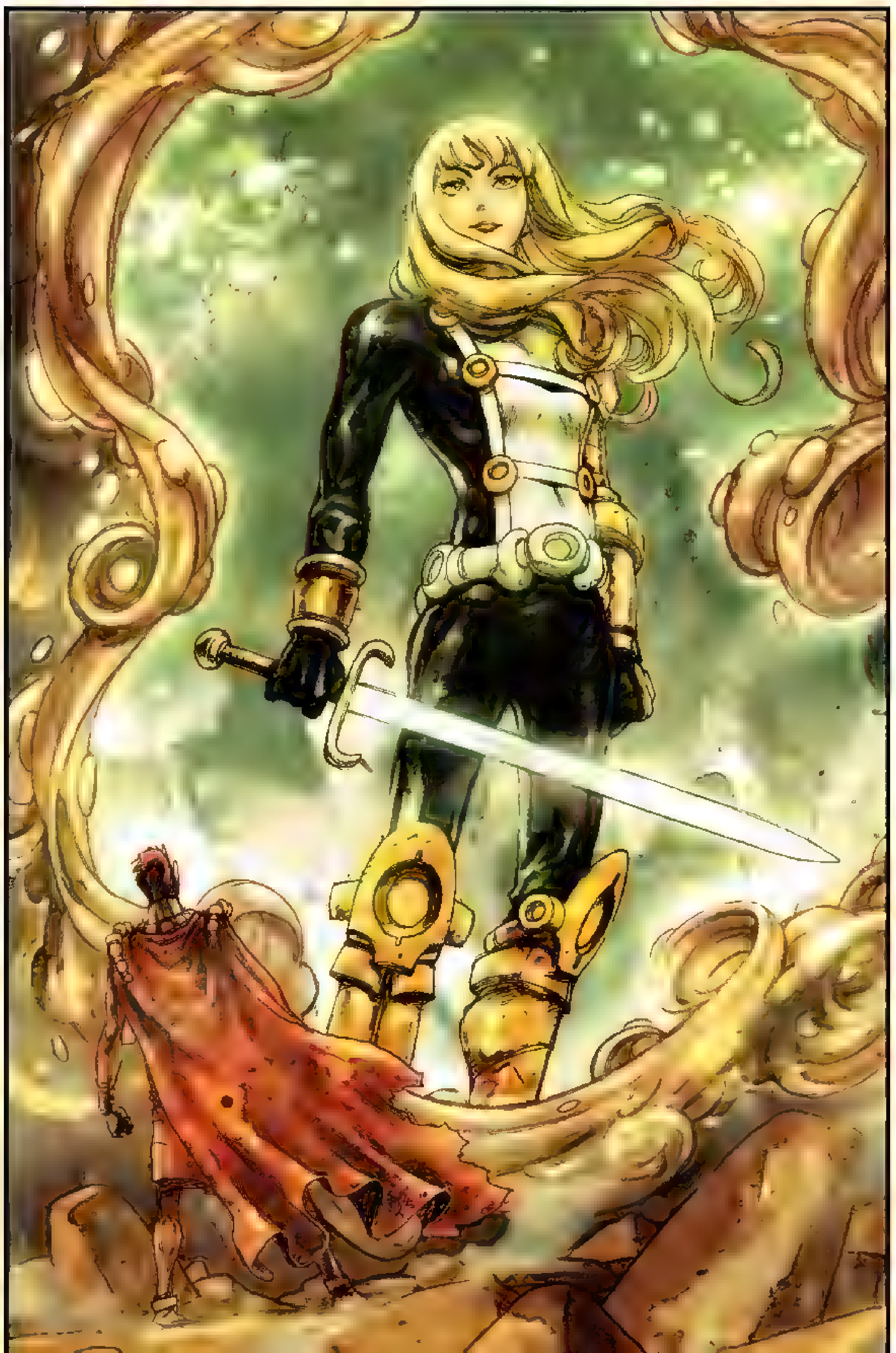

I'LL HAVE YOU FREE--
SHREDD!

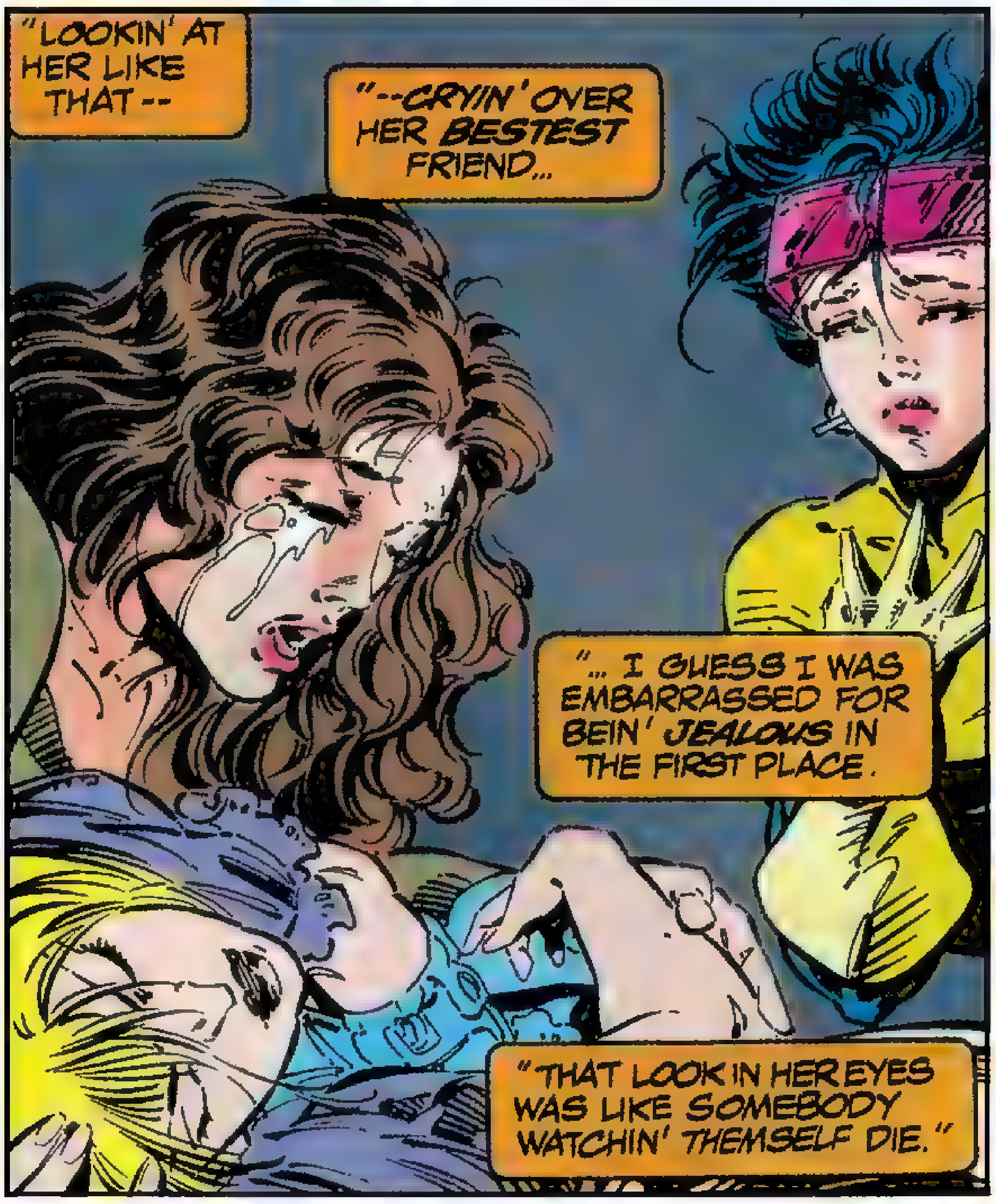
Earth was safe ... but Illyana's armor lay crumpled and broken on the ground. But as the New Mutants mourned their friend, they heard a noise within the armor – and opened it to find the younger, untainted Illyana within!

The New Mutants believed they had finally come to a happy ending, but Illyana's tragic destiny was not yet over. After a time of living once again as an innocent child, young Illyana became infected with an artificial, mutant-specific disease – the Legacy Virus – and died.

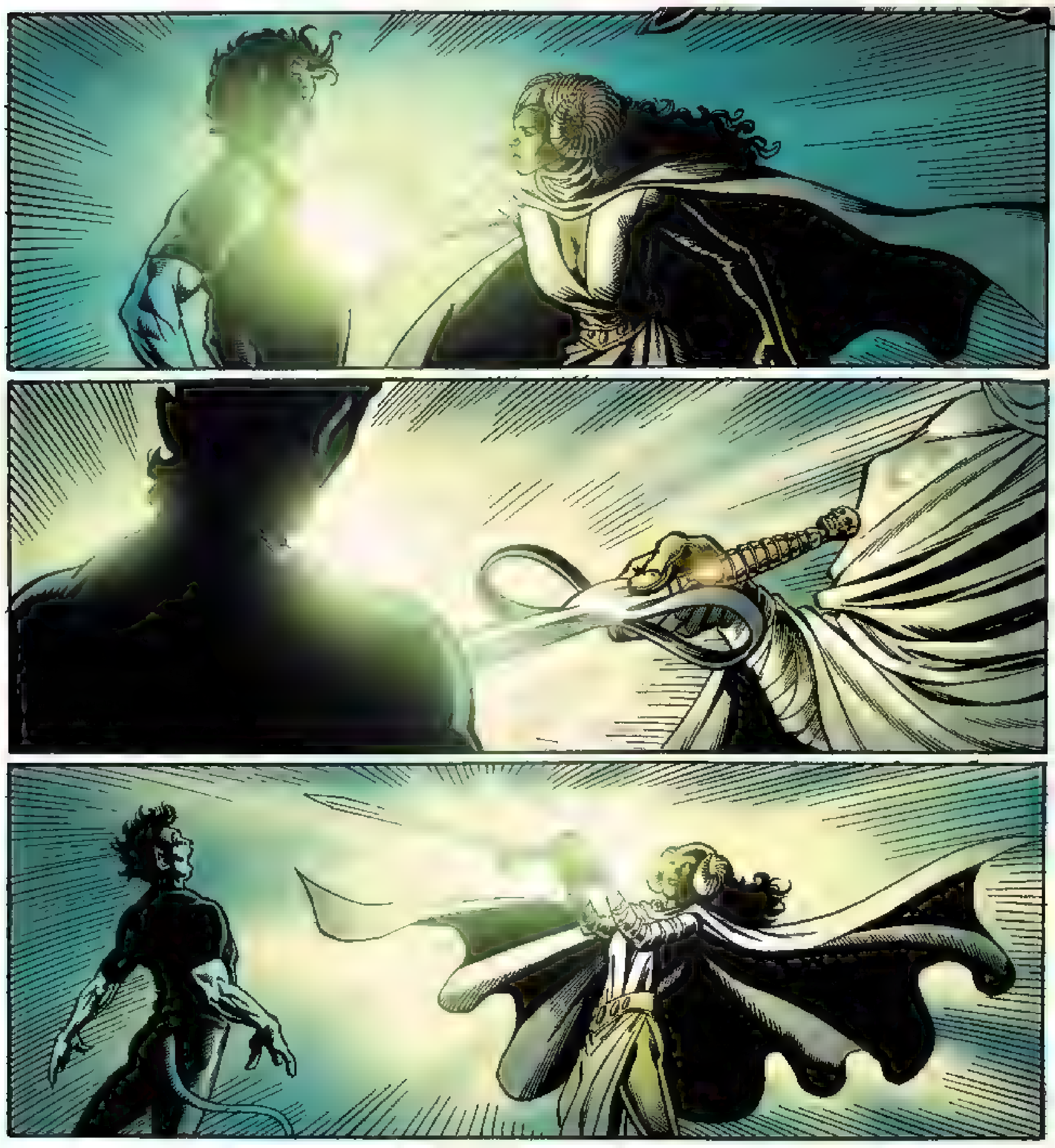
Meanwhile, the Soulsword hung here in Limbo, fought over by powerful sorcerers including Darkoth, Dr. Doom, Gravemoss and Margali Szardos. It was eventually claimed by Amanda Sefton, who used it to take over Limbo and proclaim herself the new "Magik."


SHE ENTERS THIS TALE
HER NAME IS
Magik
NOW THAT SHE HAS BECOME THIS.
YOU MUST RETURN, DAEMON-THING! YOU DO NOT BELONG IN THIS WORLD!
SURRENDER TO THE GUARDIAN OF LIMBO NOW, OR FOREVER SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES!



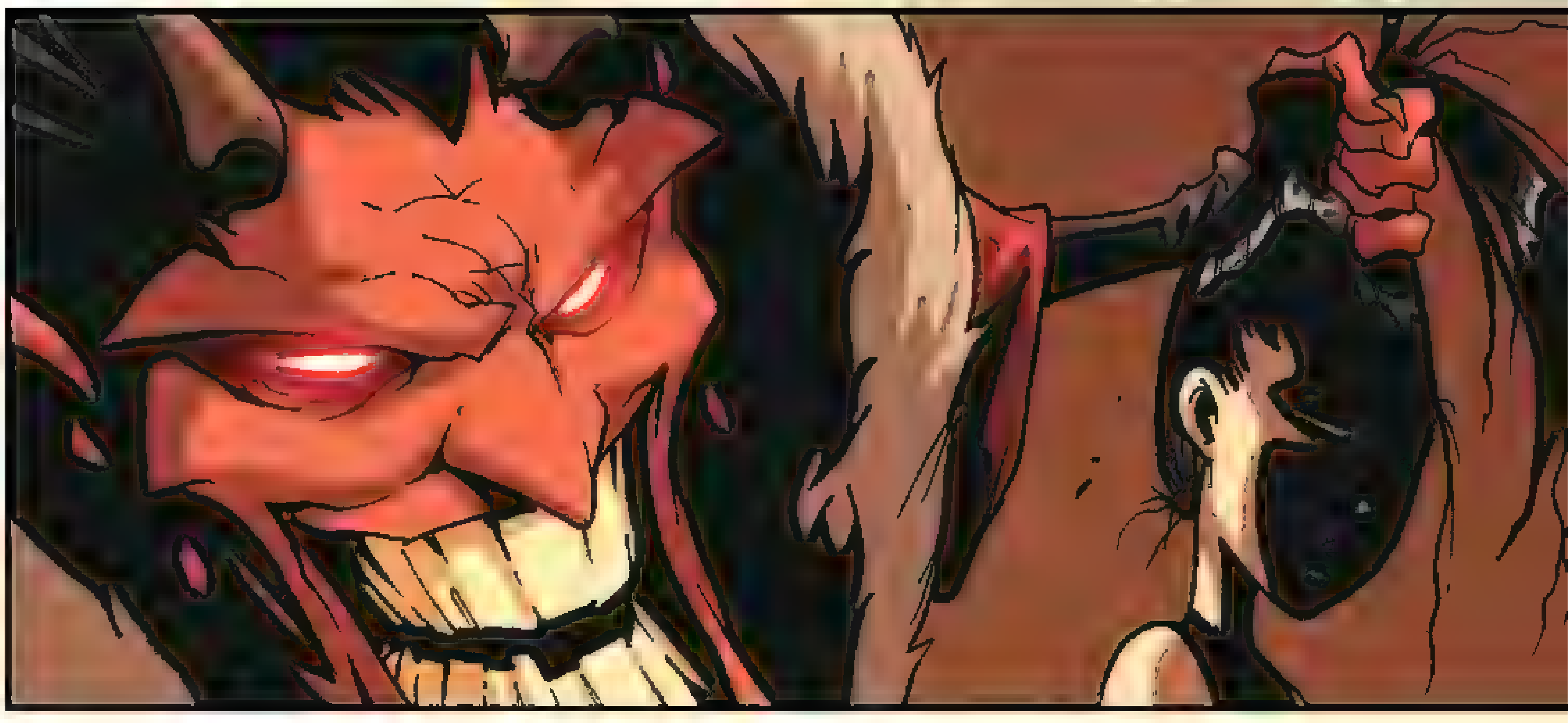

"LOOKIN' AT HER LIKE THAT --
"--CRYIN' OVER HER BESTEST FRIEND...
"... I GUESS I WAS EMBARRASSED FOR BEIN' JEALOUS IN THE FIRST PLACE.
"THAT LOOK IN HER EYES WAS LIKE SOMEBODY WATCHIN' THEMSELF DIE."

However, Amanda feared the corrupting powers of the Soulsword ... and, unbeknownst to everyone, hid it within the body of the purest person she knew – her former lover, Nightcrawler.

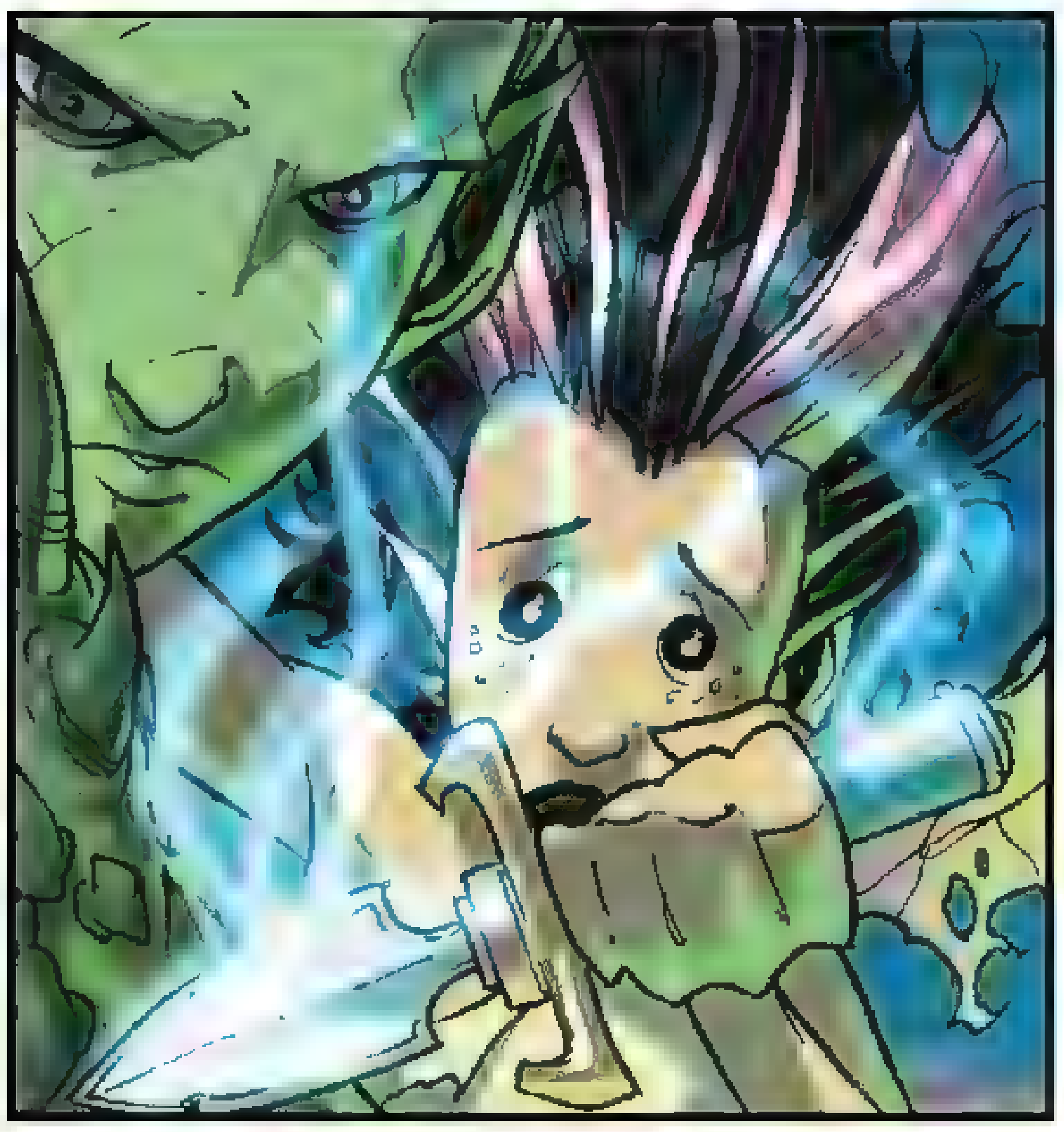


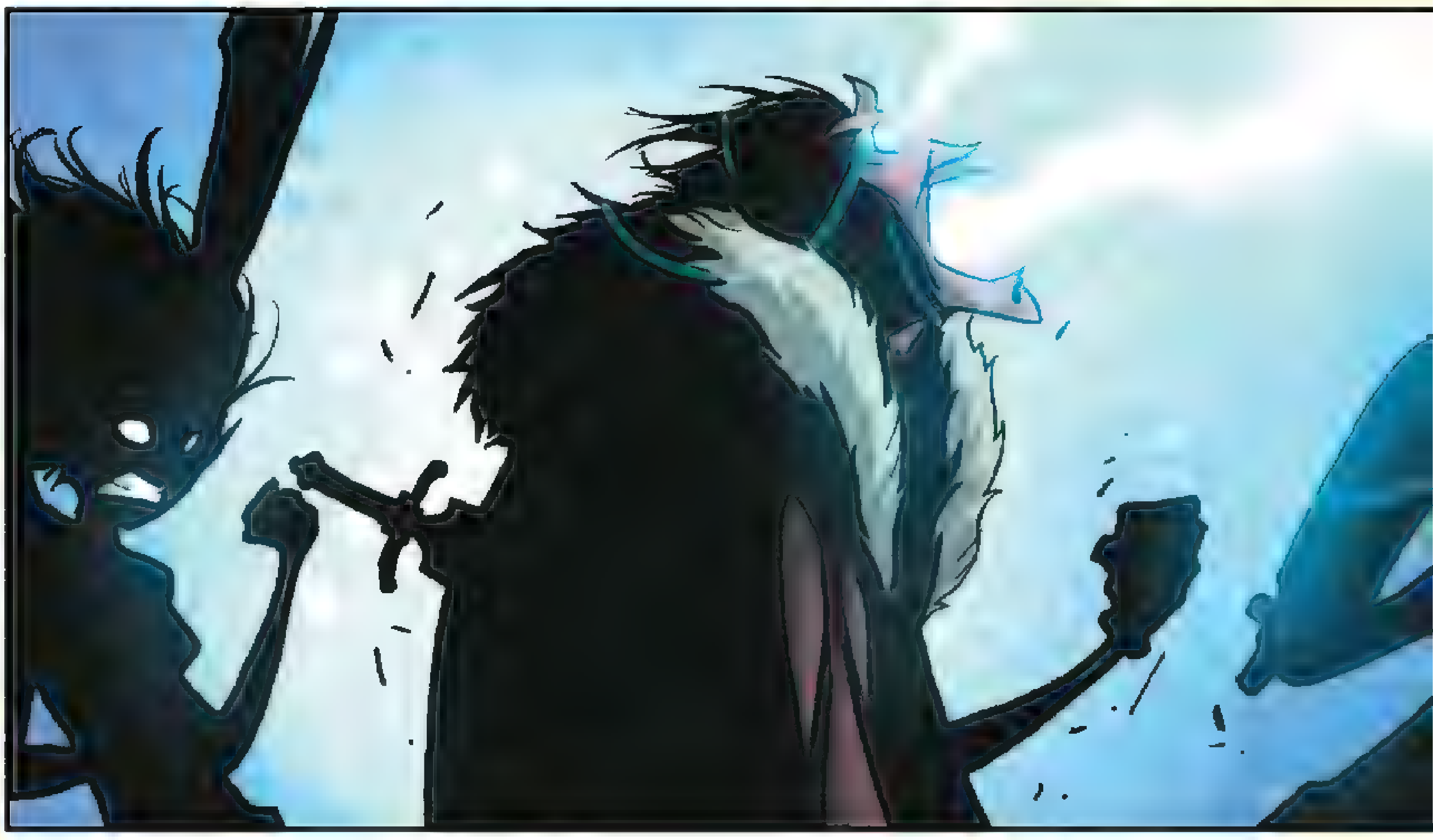
Much later, Belasco clawed his way back to Limbo, and overthrew Amanda. Obsessed with Illyana, he magically brought her back to life, recreating her as the Darkchilde he remembered – but found that he could not locate her soul.

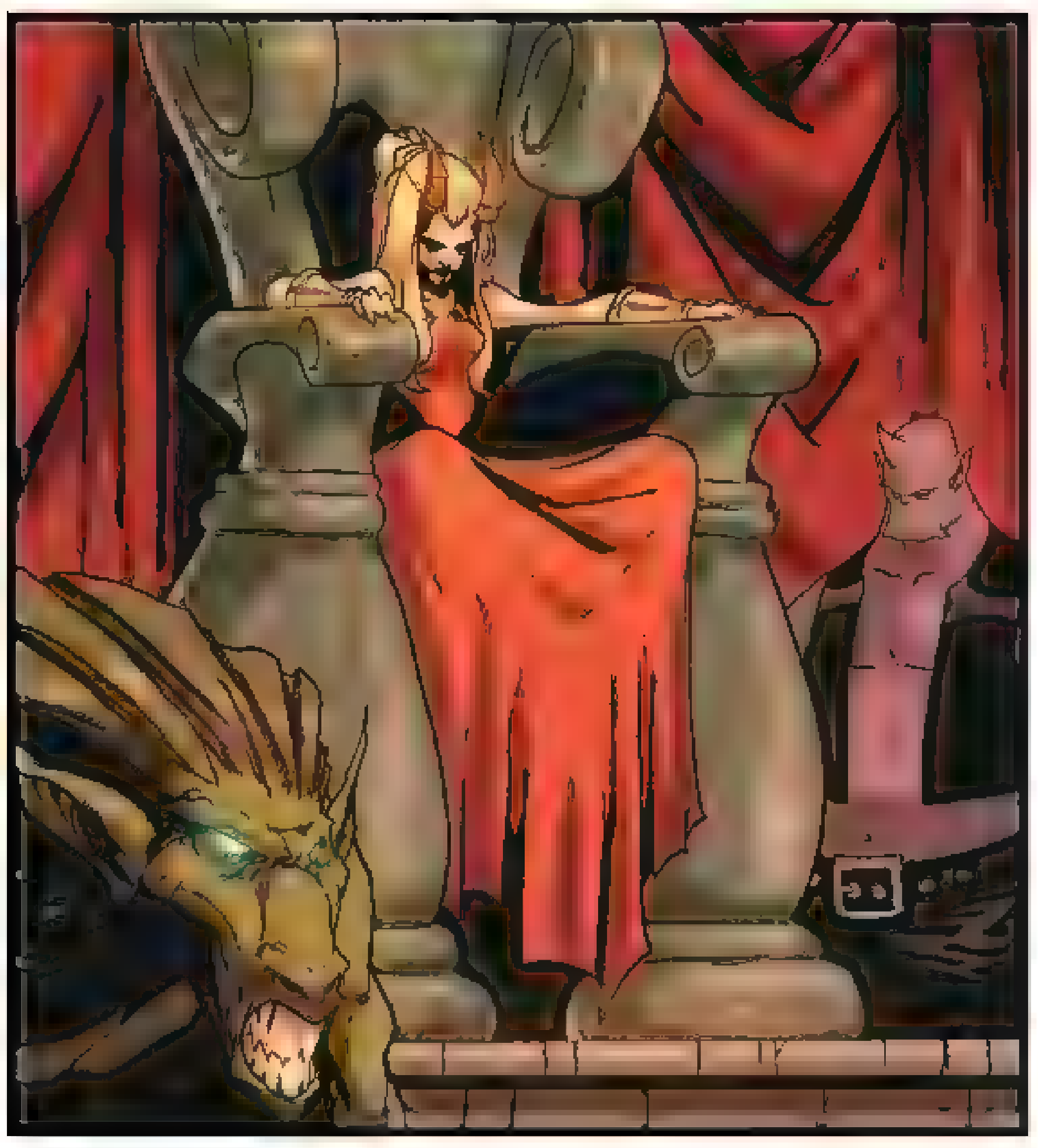
Belasco kidnapped another generation of Xavier's mutant brood, and tortured them in an effort to locate Illyana's soul. However, Illyana rescued some of the mutants, including the young Pixie – and, sensing the girl's purity, crafted a plan to defeat her former mentor.



Illyana used Pixie's innocent soul to create a bloodstone of her own, and allowing Pixie to create a soul dagger – a miniature version of Illyana's old weapon. The mutants stormed Belasco's castle, and Pixie and Illyana used the dagger to destroy him once and for all.



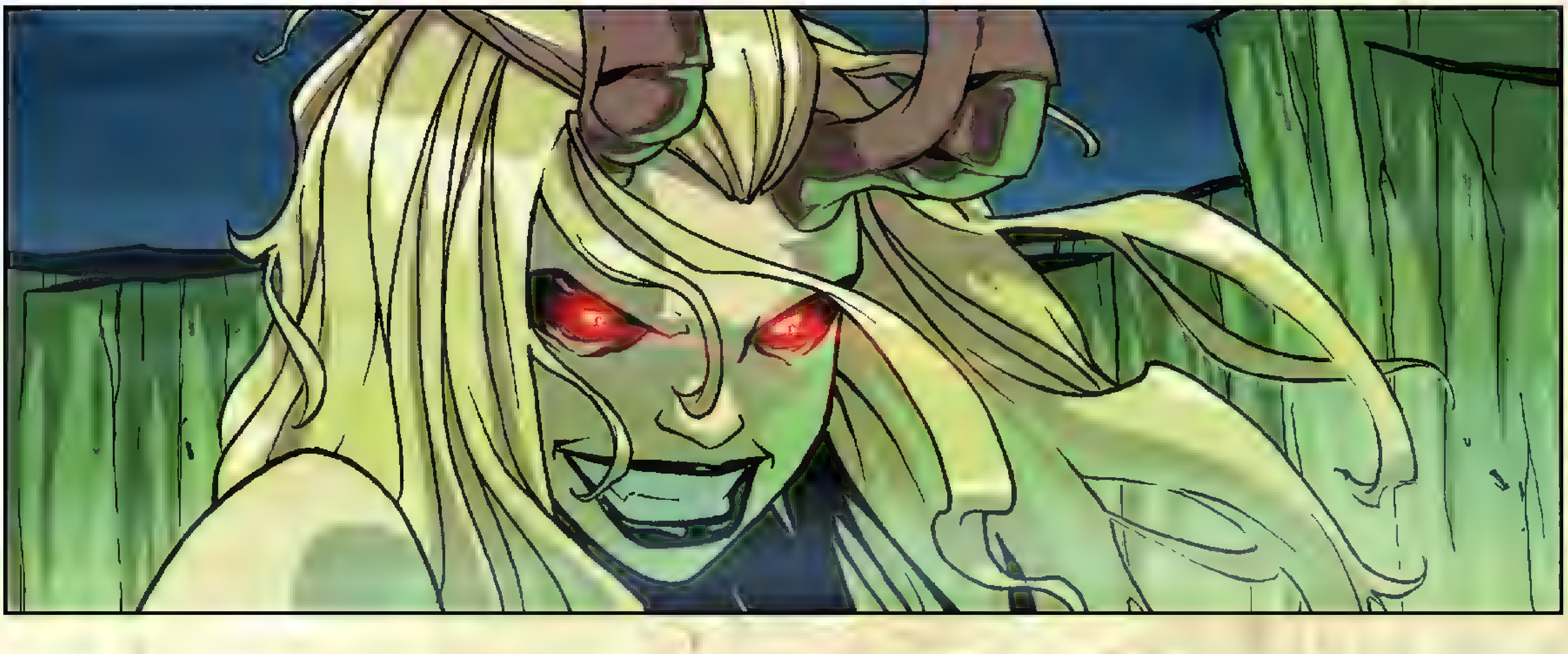




Victorious, Illyana cast the mutants back to earth, and now sits on throne of Limbo once again. S'ym and N'astirh stand by her side as loyal servants ... and behind her soulless eyes burn fires that even we demons have learned to fear.

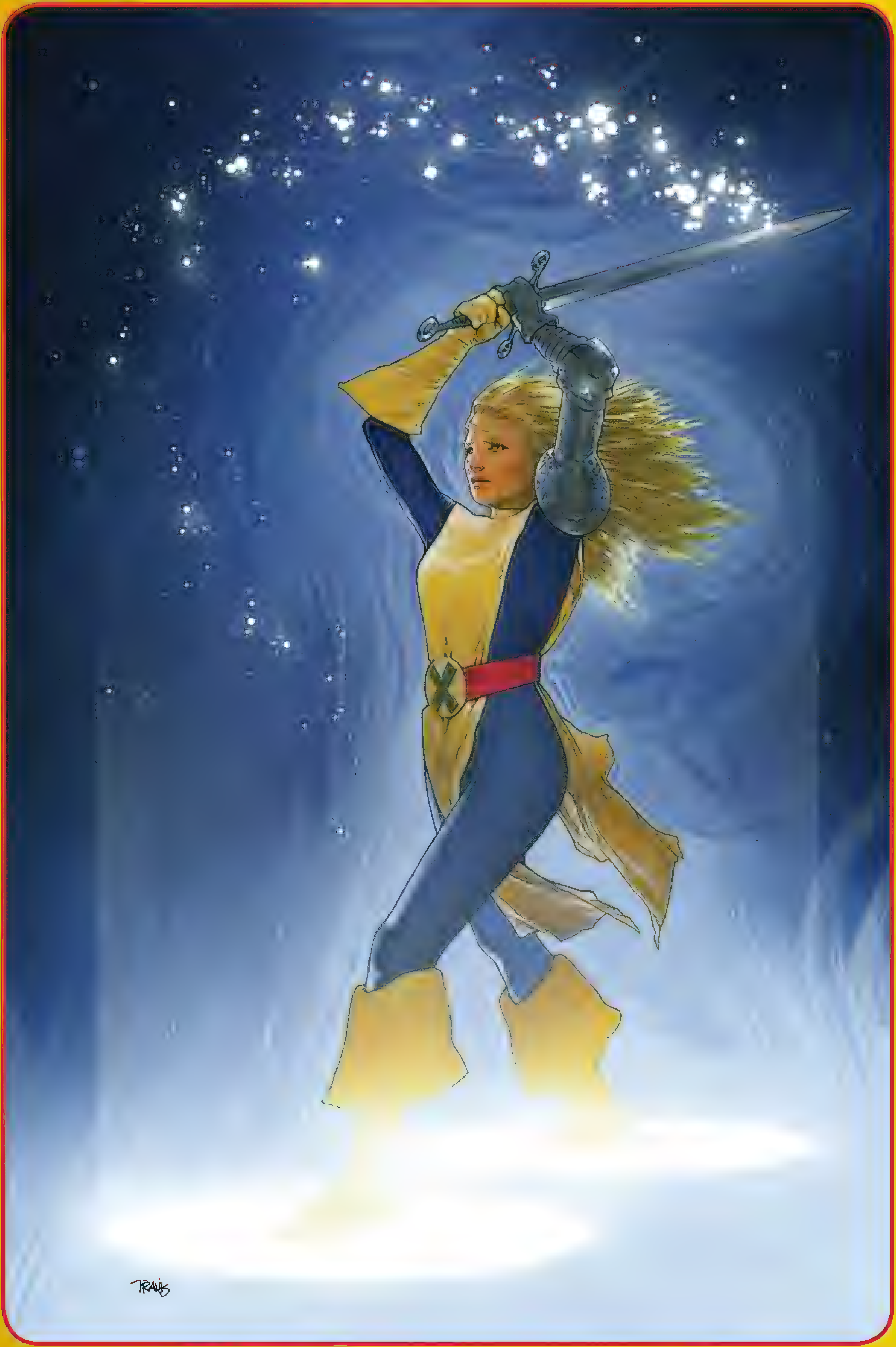
Illyana Rasputin rules Limbo once more. Tormented, evil, and in search of her soul, she schemes. And where we demons once were able to use our scrying pools to glimpse the future ... now, all we can see...

...is an inferno...

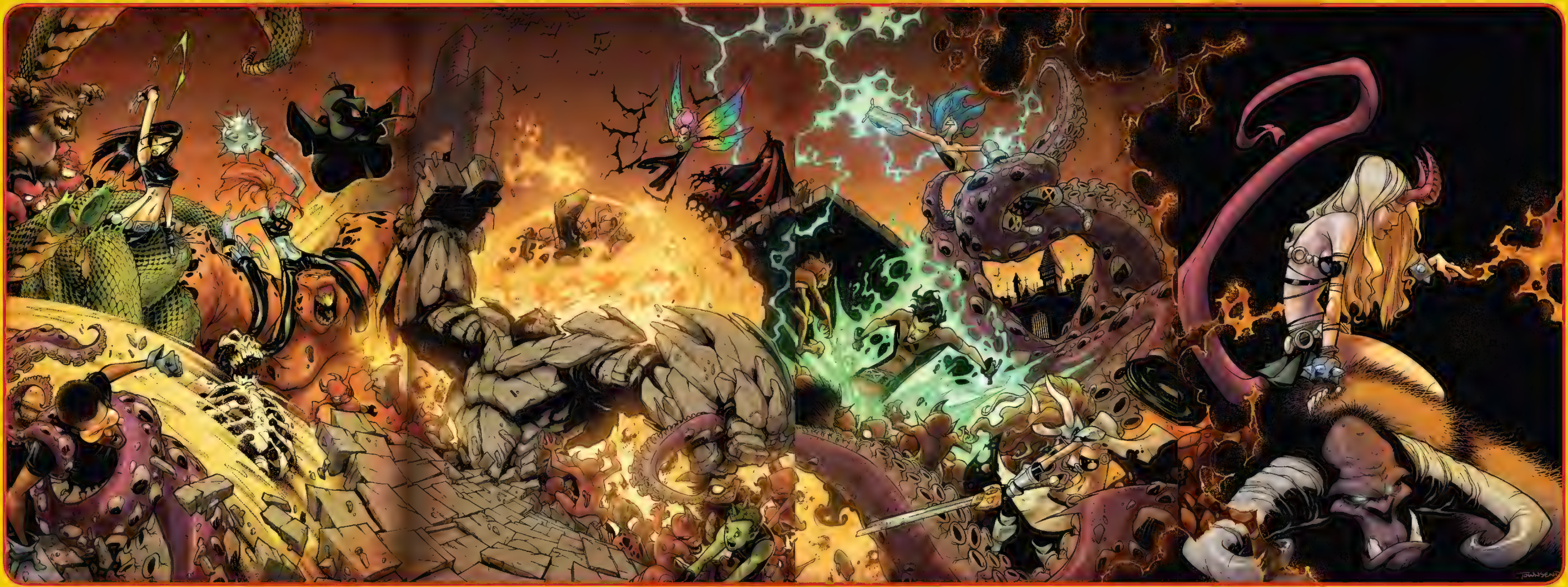


Campbell 2008
delgado

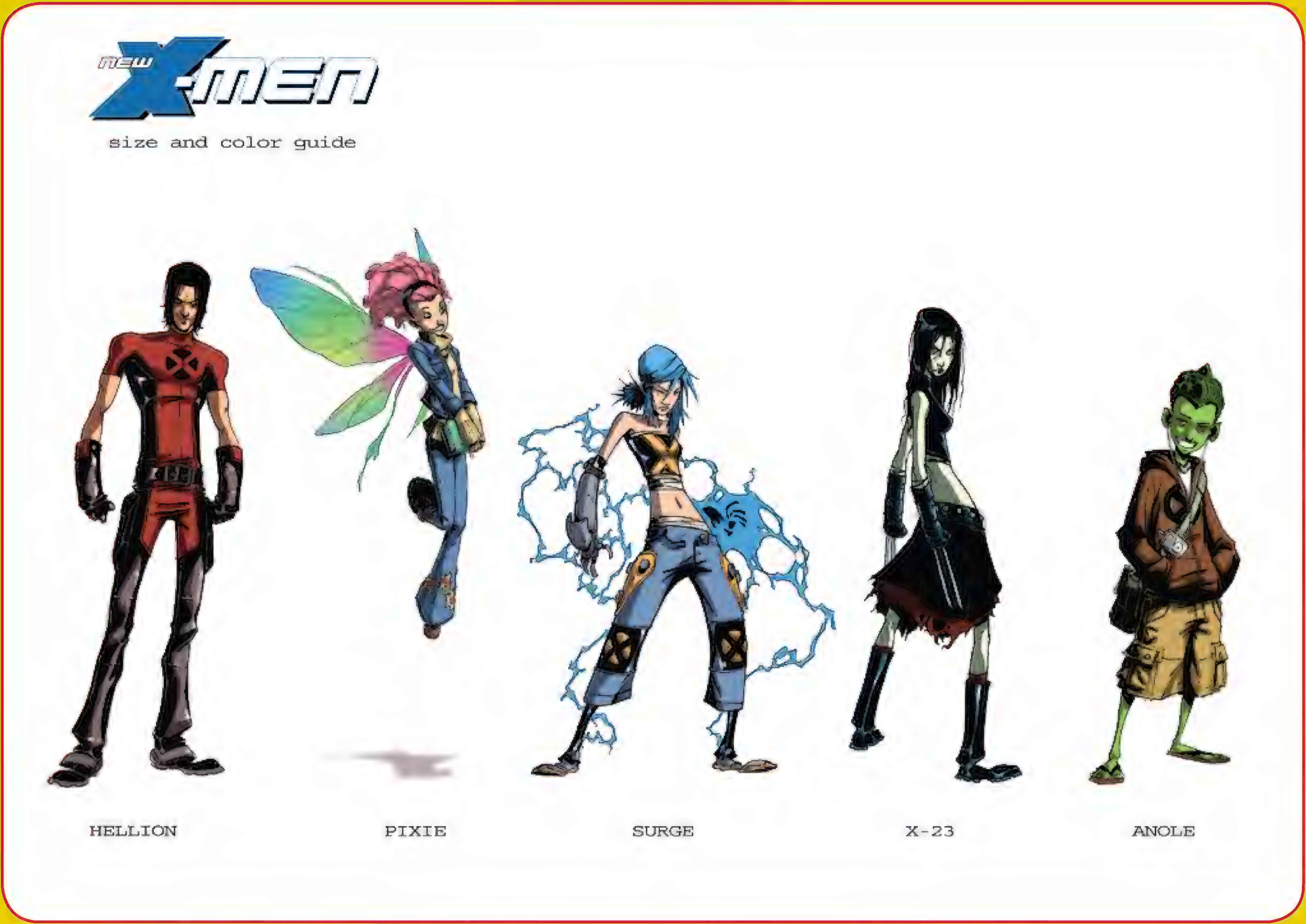
***X-INFERNUS #1* VARIANT BY**
J. Scott Campbell & Edgar Delgado



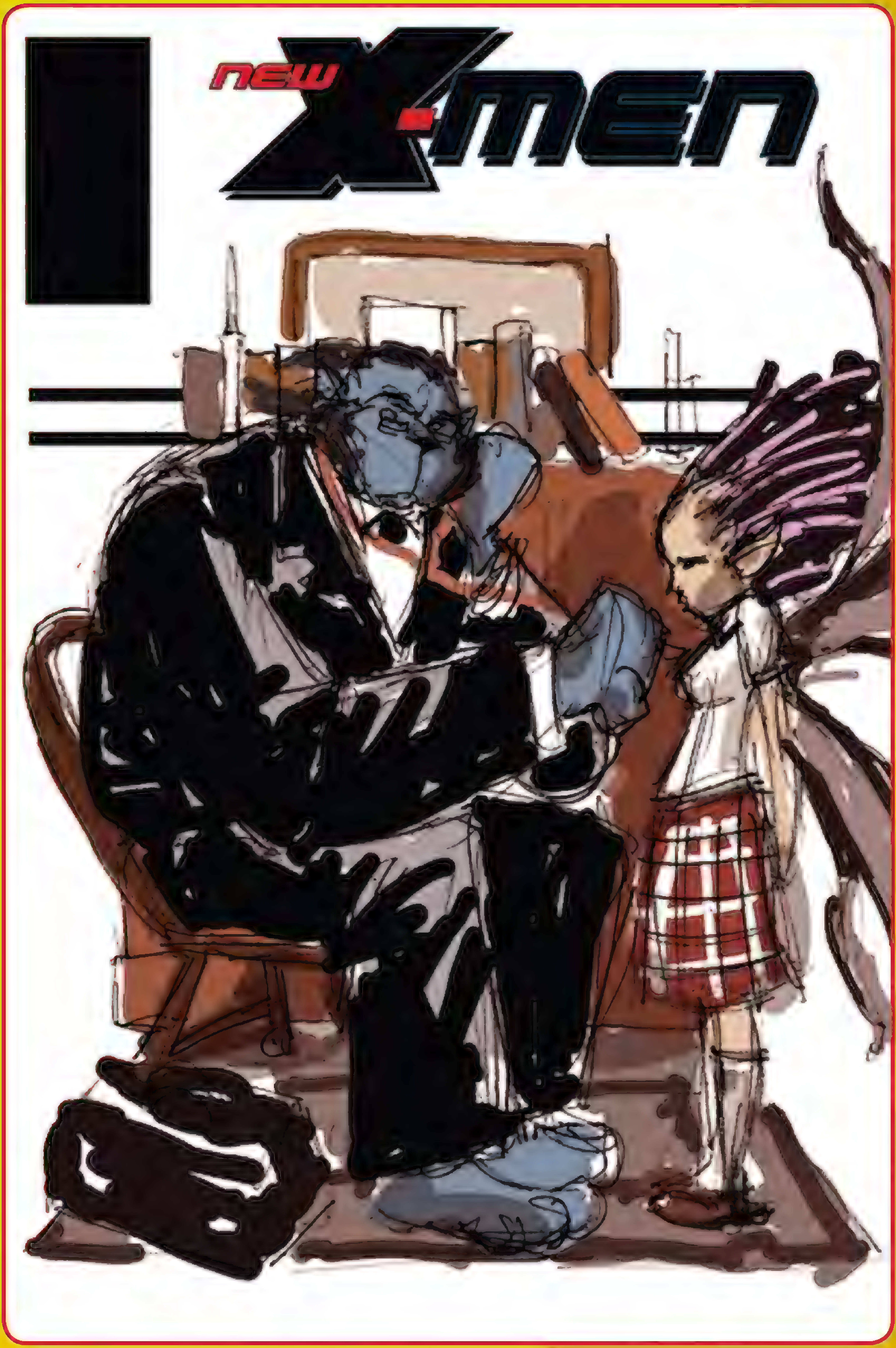
***X-INFERNUS #4* VARIANT BY**
Travis Charest



***NEW X-MEN #38-41* COMBINED COVER ART BY**
Skottie Young & Tim Townsend

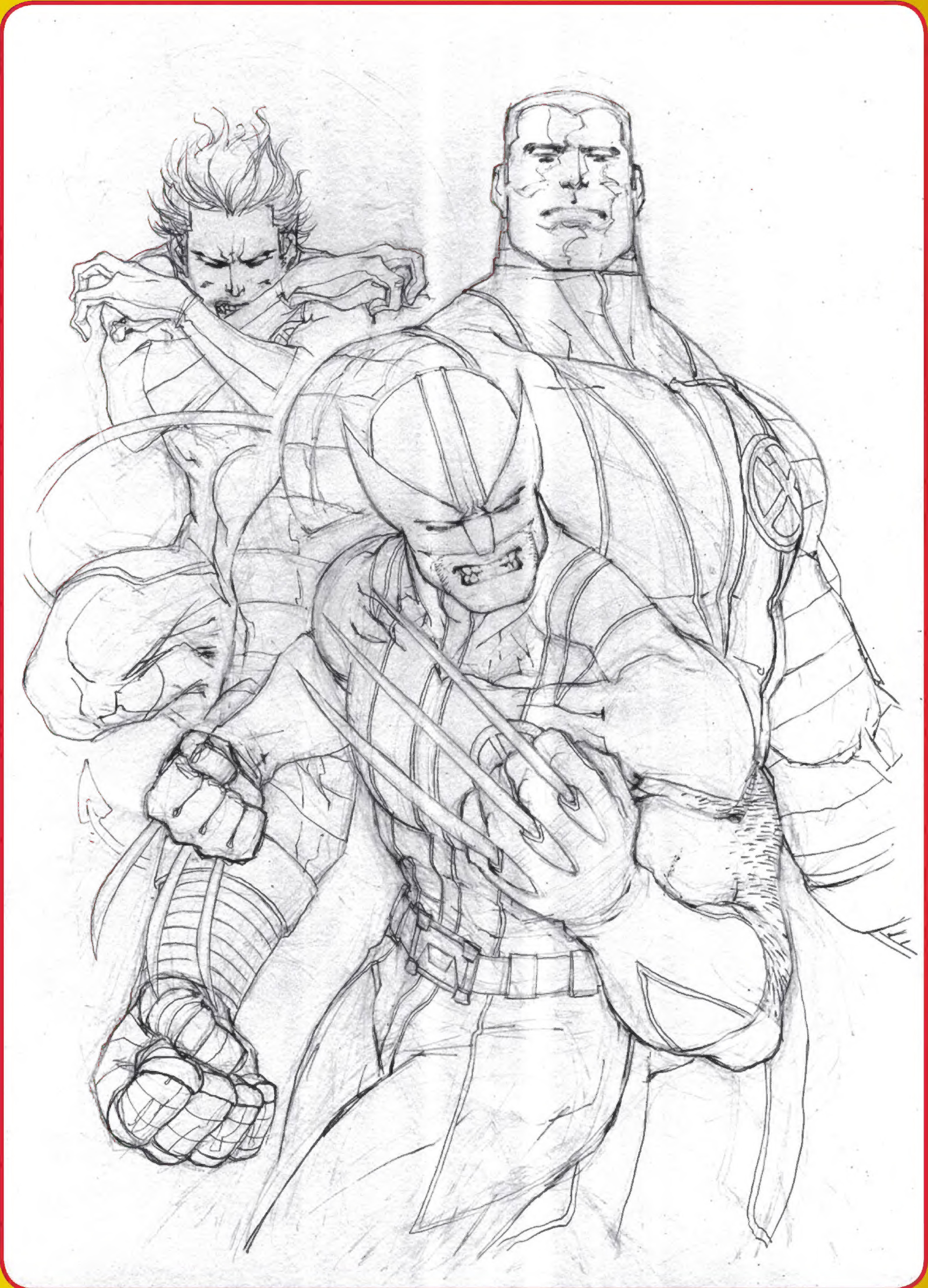

new X-MEN
size and color guide
HELLION
PIXIE
SURGE
X-23
ANOLE

***NEW X-MEN* CHARACTER DESIGNS BY**
Skottie Young



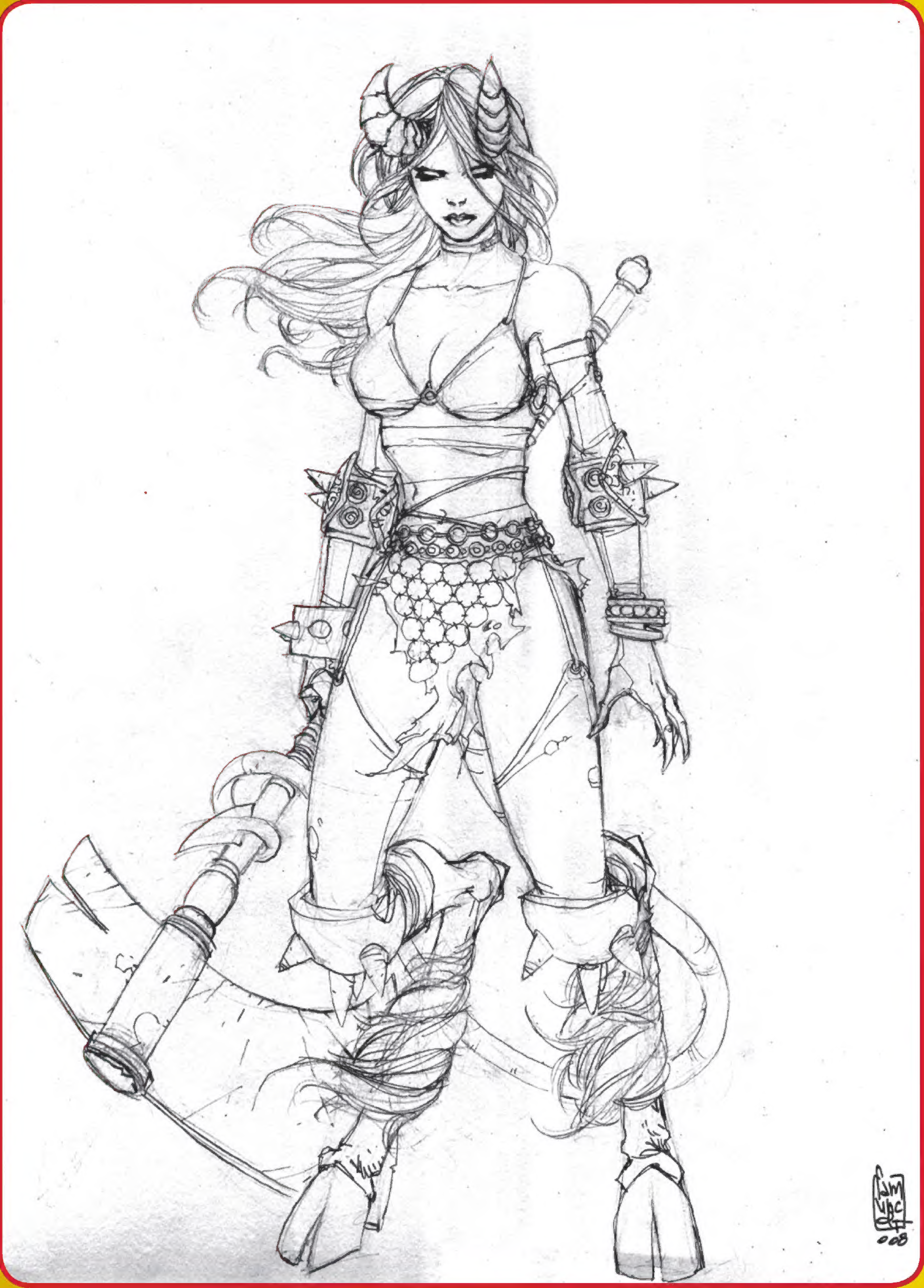
UNUSED *NEW X-MEN #42* COVER SKETCH BY
Skottie Young

NEW X-MEN #43 **PINUP BY**
Bryan Hitch & Paul Mounts



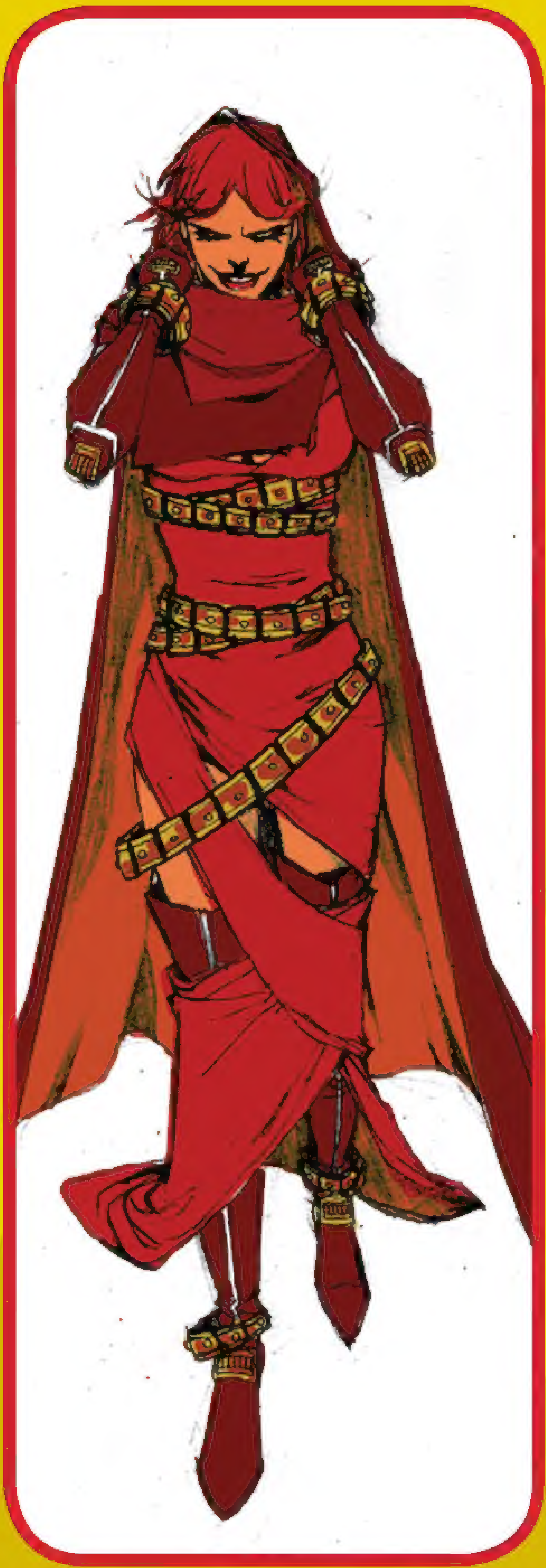
X-MEN

X-INFERNUS **CHARACTER SKETCH BY**
Giuseppe Camuncoli

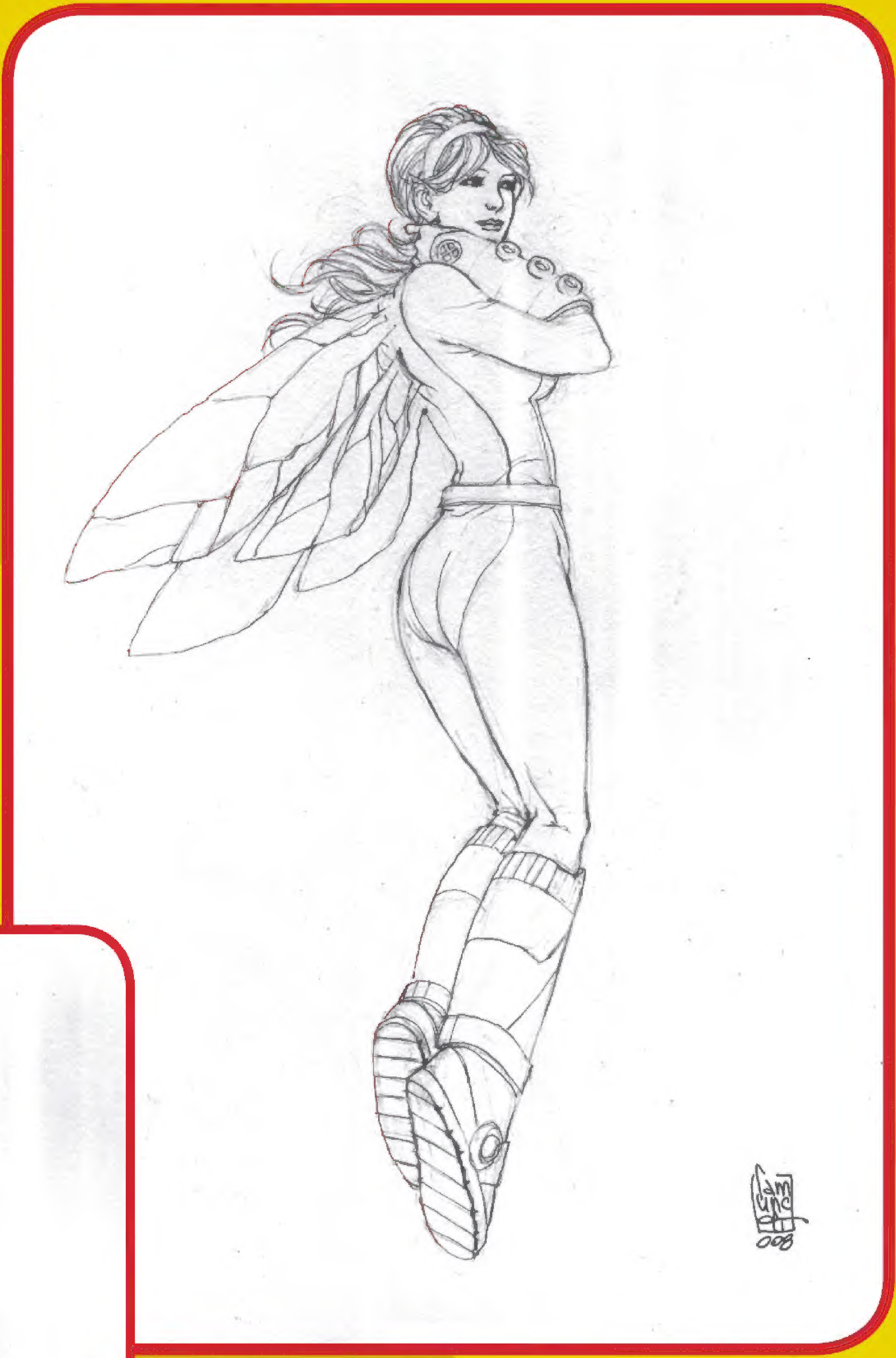


DARKCHILD

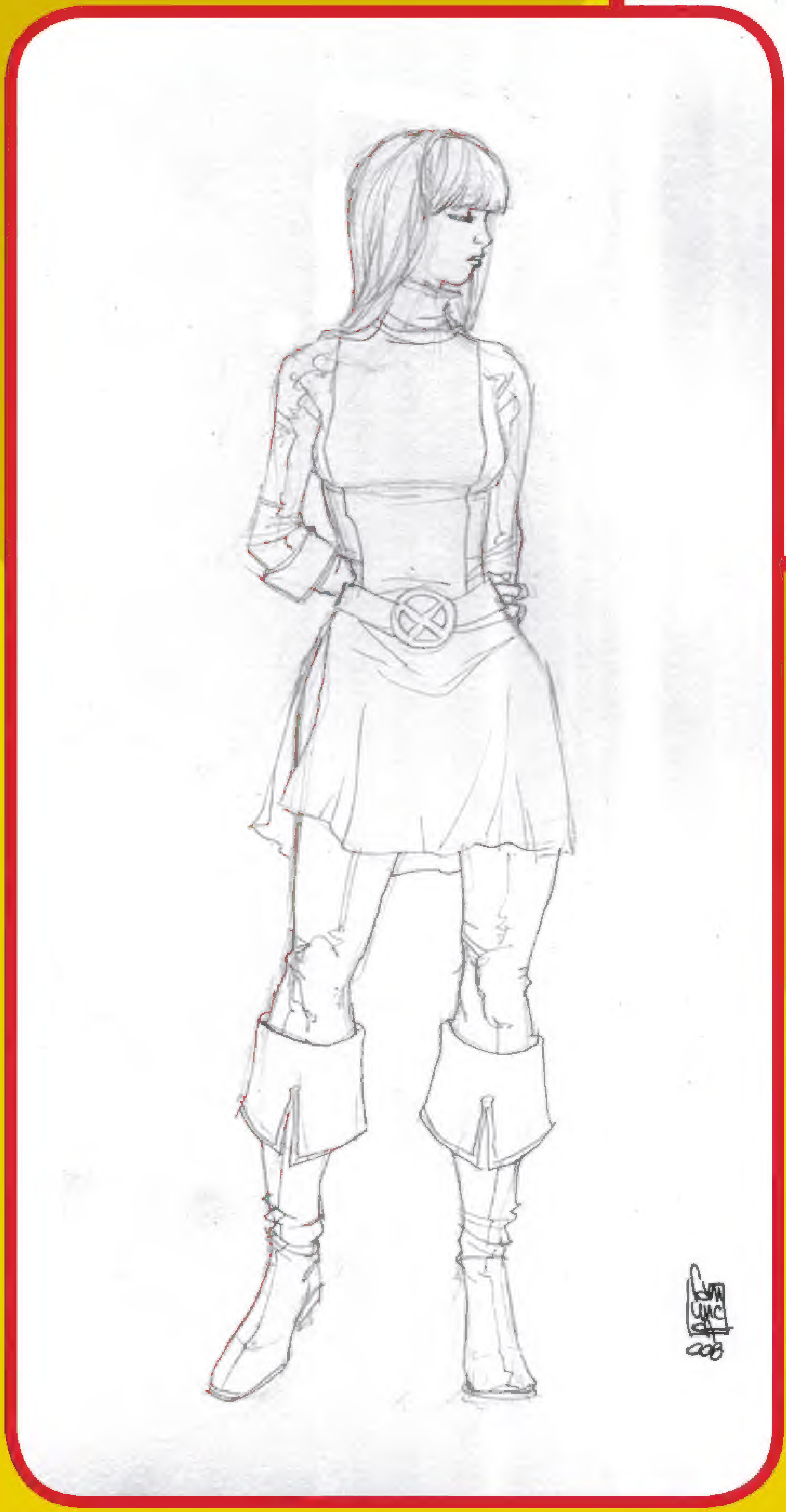
X-INFERNUS **CHARACTER SKETCH BY**
Giuseppe Camuncoli



WITCHFIRE



PIXIE



ILLYANA

X-INFERNUS **CHARACTER SKETCHES BY**
Giuseppe Camuncoli

X-23'S PAST RETURNS TO HAUNT THE NEW X-MEN!

Can Laura and Hellion rescue Mercury before the horrifying, mutant-eating Predator X is unleashed? Then, the demonic Belasco pulls the X-Mansion into Limbo — and he's looking for Magik! Illyana Rasputin has returned to life, and Belasco will put the New X-Men through literal hell until he finds her! With the team scattered, wounded and terrified, all hope seems lost. But Illyana has arrived, mad as hell — and she wants her soul back! Can Pixie, of all people, help save the day? And when Magik's quest catches the attention of the other demon lords, the X-Men must help Illyana find herself before an ancient evil is unleashed!

PM!
VLASCO
MARTEGOD

Collecting **New X-Men (2004) #33-43**, **X-Infernus #1-4** and **Saga**, and material from **X-Men Unlimited (2004) #14** and **X-Men: Divided We Stand #2** — written by Craig Kyle, Christopher Yost and C.B. Cebulski; and illustrated by Paco Medina, Skottie Young, Giuseppe Camuncoli and more.

T+